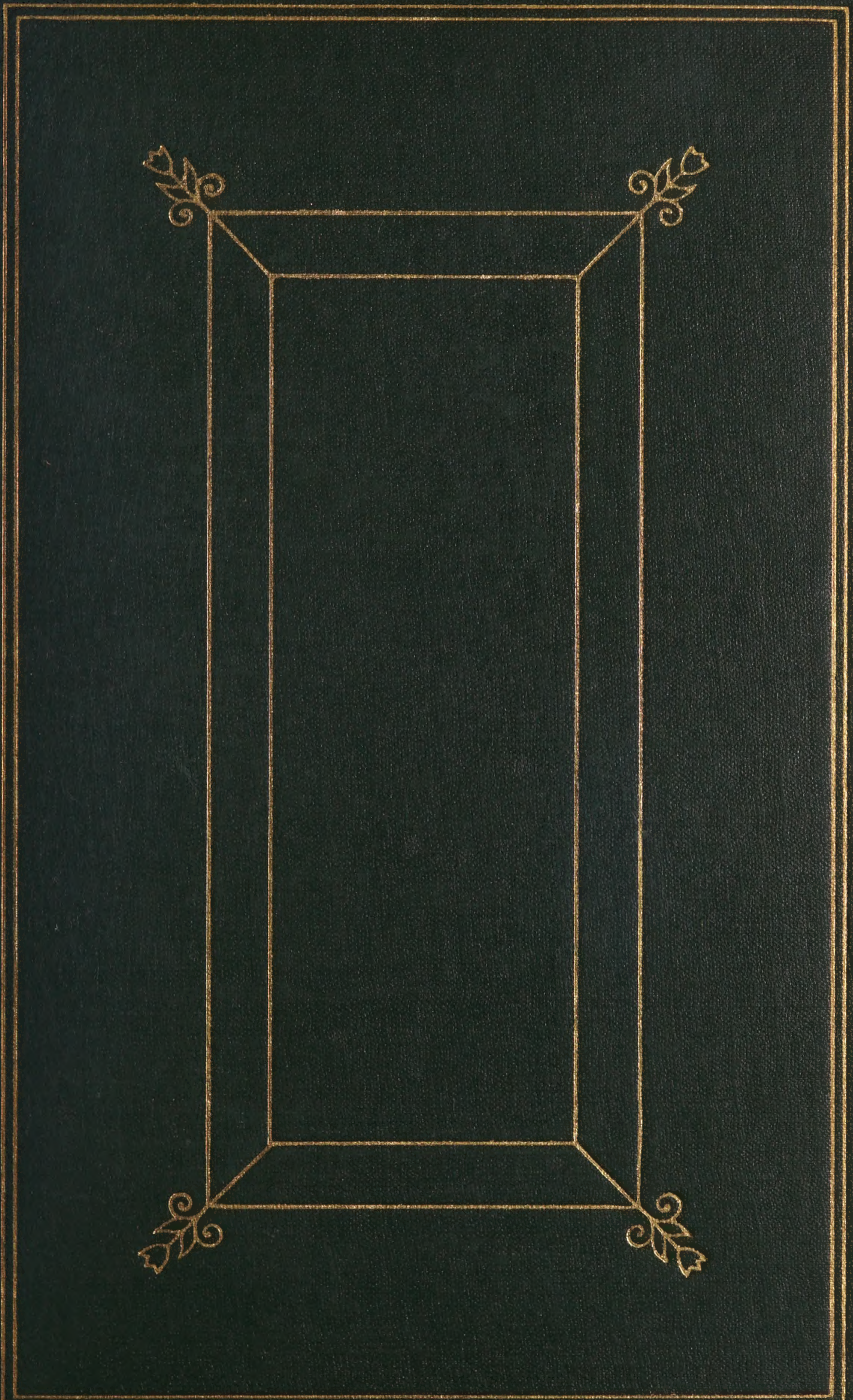

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TO
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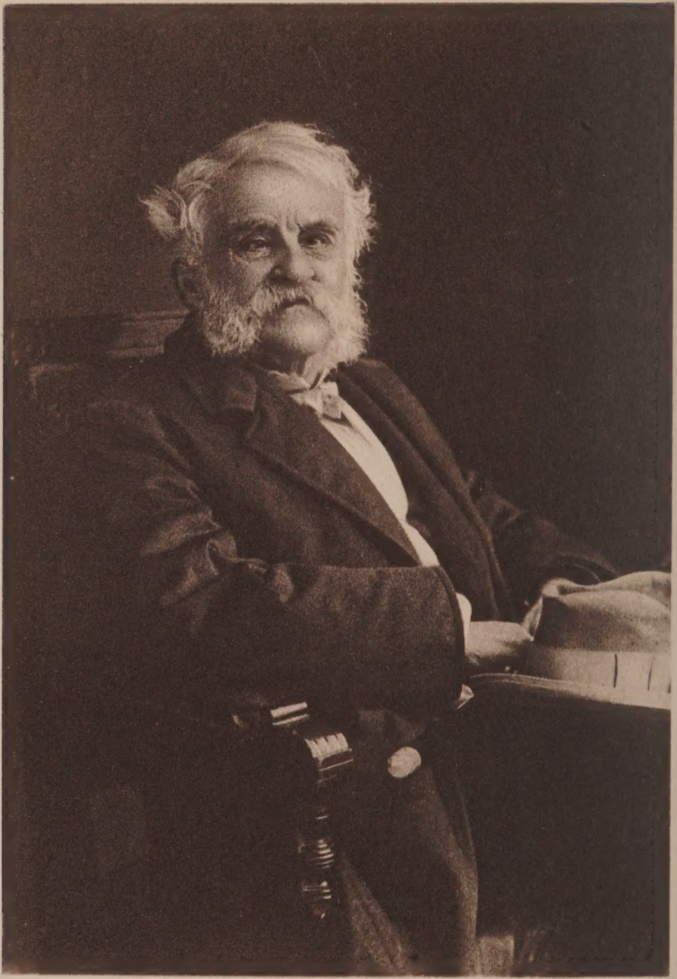

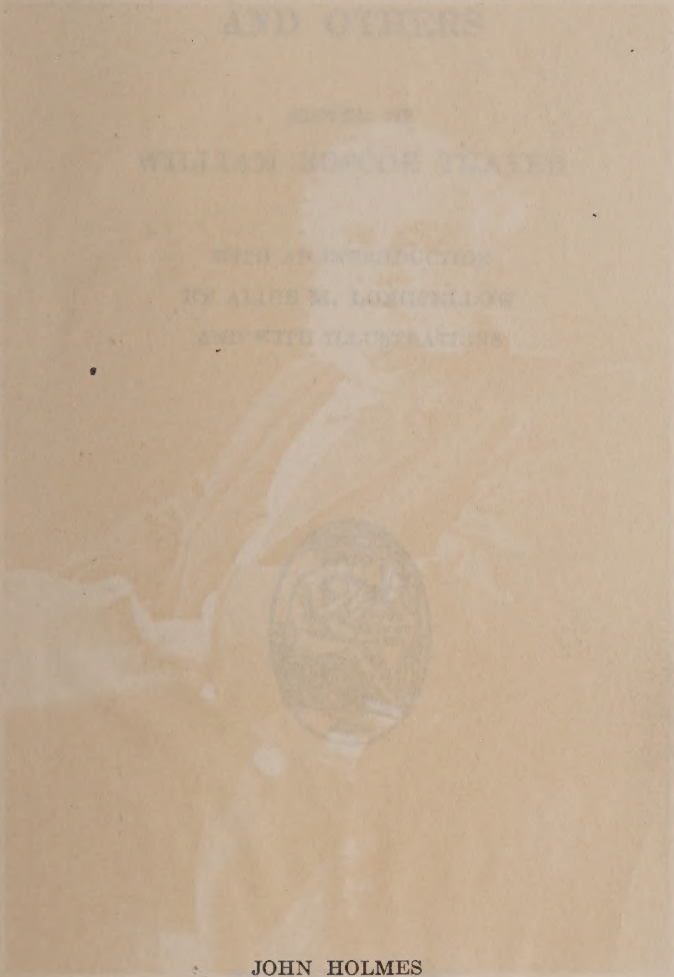

JOHN HOLMES

LETTERS OF JOHN HOLMES
TO JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL AND OTHERS

EDITED BY

WILLIAM ROSCOE THAYER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY ALICE M. LONGFELLOW
AND WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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EDITOR'S NOTE

This book is issued under the auspices of the Cambridge Historical Society, which, early in 1916, appointed a Committee, consisting of Miss Alice M. Longfellow, Miss Mary Lee Ware, and William Roscoe Thayer, to collect and edit the letters of John Holmes. The letters as written by Mr. Holmes are often hard to decipher; sometimes the manuscript has been torn, and Mr. Holmes, even in his best days of writing, did not permit himself to be too strictly bound by laws of punctuation or of orthography. In editing, our purpose has been to make the text as clear as possible by supplying here and there omitted words, commas, and semicolons, and by correcting obviously unintentional slips in spelling.

W. R. T.

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INTRODUCTION

Mr. John Holmes, or John Holmes, as he was always affectionately called, belonged to an age of quietude and simplicity now long passed away, and scarcely understood.

The rule of his life was few needs and desires, few friends, and simple surroundings. He was born in 1812 in the old gambrel-roofed parsonage, the son of the Reverend Abiel Holmes, and younger brother of Oliver Wendell Holmes. He graduated from Harvard in 1832, and remained in the charming old home with his mother as long as she lived.

He was betrothed in his youth to a young companion, but unfortunately she died before their marriage, and the affection and devotion of his warm and unselfish nature were bestowed in fullest measure on his mother.

He was over fifty when she died, and he then moved with the old housekeeper to the little house on Appian Way, or A. W., as he always called it.

The chronicles of this busy thoroughfare gave him infinite amusement, and here he closed his retired life in 1899.

A chronic lameness kept him often confined to his room, and, with his naturally quiet disposition, prevented his taking any active part in life.

Three short trips to Europe and occasional visits to his friends were his only change from this life, outwardly dull and meagre, but inwardly, and to his intimates, rich with affection, originality, and humor.

"There is but one John," said his friend James Russell Lowell; and Judge Hoar, whose friends say he seldom indulged in verse-writing, was moved by his love for this lovable friend to express these feelings in verse:—

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

And surely I think we know him,
And could guess from whom he came
For he bears his credentials with him —
Not in earthquake, wind, and flame,
But the still small voice which ever
Befits the message Divine.
The servant, who stands and waits
By the swiftly hurrying line
Of the winged host, serves as well
As speeding Angel or Man.
And the quiet may bring a message
Which the noisy never can!
He was sent to *us!* to the life-time
Of each he has added cheer.
And has helped us join in saying
"Methinks it is good to be here."

So modest, and shy, and patient,
So willing and wise and true, —
We are glad that, when God sent him,
He was willing to send us, too.
Now whenever you take the journey
That leads through the shadows dim
Please say to the One who sent you here
That we're much obliged to him.

What more can be said. To the few who had the inestimable pleasure and blessing of his friendship, words can add nothing to the charm of his memory. To the many who did not know him, no words can convey any adequate impression of his personality. The delightful mingling of loyal affection, tenderness, modesty, sensitiveness, quaintness, courtesy, overflowing fun and humor, and an almost child-like petulance at times, soon ending in a laugh, made a personality quite distinct, and attractive beyond expression. In these modern days too much, I think, is made of environment. Certainly the bare little upper chamber in the modest house on Appian Way held more of sweetness, and charm, and entertainment, than comes to the fortune of many grander houses. Mr. Holmes's mind was full of quaint and fantastic ideas that flashed out suddenly and spontaneously, too vivid and impressionistic to be recorded without seeming trivial, but inimitable at the time, accompanied with his flashing eyes and droll manner. As Mr. Howells said, "He would suddenly sparkle into some gayety, too ethereal for remembrance."

Who can forget his pathetic revery about Methuselah, shrinking more and more with old age, and finally pitifully whining, "Oh, dear! oh, dear! I wish some one would keep my shoe-strings from blowing in my eyes." Or the grand description of Cæsar Augustus returning in triumph from the wars, with full detail of captives, slaves, and wild beasts; and then the horrible suspicion, as Cæsar rode proudly in his chariot, that something was amiss — the street urchins were slyly laughing and pointing at him. Then the collapse of his glory, and his nervous haste to reach the Palace Gate and rush upstairs to his wife, — "Oh, Augusta, Augusta, is my helmet on straight?"

One of the comical scenes he loved to depict was a shy young man at a party, who, having been served with tea and cake and finding the tea too hot to drink and no table near, seeks vainly to pour it into the saucer to cool, but cannot on account of the piece of cake in his hand. At last a happy thought. He will put the cake in his mouth, and leave his hands free. The tea is successfully poured and he is about to drink, when it suddenly occurs to him that he still has the cake in his mouth, and he is as far as ever from relief. John Holmes's look of sudden despair and hopelessness when the young man makes this discovery was something which no one else could equal. Hopeless also to render the look of the poor mother whose boy having had plate after plate of ice cream, still got more by the threat, "If you don't give it, I'll tell"; and finally, being refused, shouted out, "My new breeches are made from the old window curtains." Stories nothing in themselves became dramatic episodes when acted by Mr. Holmes.

When something was said about the increasing number of students who failed to complete the undergraduate course but were dropped from class to class, Mr. Holmes predicted that a race of students would be ultimately developed which would never get through college, but might die at ninety on the very day before Commencement. In his lively imagination a group of Faculty and President were seen gathered round the bed of the aged man, imploring him to hold out a day longer. "Think," they said, "what an honor it would be to the University to have graduated you at last, and what a disappointment should you expire an undergraduate after all! Rouse yourself! Make one more effort! Live until to-morrow and die a Bachelor of Arts!"

On one occasion, in entering a friend's parlor he stumbled over a rocking-chair, and then nothing would do but he must enter the room half a dozen times and stumble over the chair each time, imitating the voice and manner of different people he knew.

My fortunate entrance into this charming atmosphere came about quite by chance, as some of the best things of life so often happen. Mr. Holmes was then over eighty, and losing his eyesight. One afternoon I chanced to meet Miss Charlotte Dana on Brattle Street. "Oh," she said, "why don't you go to see Mr. John Holmes? He has sprained his ankle, and as he can't see to read, he is very lonely and dull."

"I will go in now," I said, glad of the opportunity; and there I found him stretched on his uncomfortable couch, with a cord under the sole of his foot, like a stirrup, to hold it in place, a comical mixture of patience and indignation at adverse fate.

I happened to have in my hand a book for the binders, a sketch of the Vendean leader during the French Revolution. A most happy chance, for the French Revolution was an unending fund of interest to Mr. Holmes. We began to read at once, and for five years, two afternoons in the week were devoted to France. We went through every word written by Erckmann-Chatrian, his special delight, and everything else about the Revolution not too profound.

Mr. Holmes loved to act out the different characters, especially the military ones, and we celebrated the heroes' birthdays, and had all sorts of delightful and foolish fun.

One of his favorite conceits was to consider himself a military man, because he once paid a fee of three dollars to join a military company in college, the Washington Harvard Guard, and he always received me standing erect behind the front door with his cane at shoulder-arms, like a musket. And I must come exactly at the appointed time, not too early, not too late, for Mr. Holmes was truly, as he called himself, "an old gent of the old school," and all the *convenances* must be courteously respected.

After his lunch he must have his cigar. That finished, all the windows must be opened, regardless of weather, until every vestige of smoke was removed. Then very reluctantly, pussy, an old inhabitant, must be removed from the only comfortable chair, and the cushion turned. (Some years before, Mr. Holmes wrote: "I ought to tell you of the recent arrival of a tortoise-shell kit of seven weeks at this house, the most inextinguishable creature you ever saw, a mere combination of wool and electricity, just as much at home in the world as if she had been seven hundred years in it and remembered R. Cœur de L.'s leather doublet, which she guarded from the rats.") Then he took up his post downstairs, ready to open the front door with his own peculiar mingling of cordiality and decorum.

I am not competent to speak of Mr. Holmes's early days, but I am glad to quote from the sketch of him by T. W. Higginson.

He describes an evening party in Cambridge for the celebrated Père Hyacinthe and his wife. "Their little boy of ten was eagerly collecting autographs, and whenever a guest entered he asked his mother, 'Est-il célèbre?' At last there entered a short, squarely built man, with white hair, white mustache, and thick eyebrows, — still black, — with erect figure, fine carriage of the head, and a bearing often described as military. The hostess explained to the little boy that this new guest, though not personally famous, was the brother of the celebrated Oliver Wendell Holmes. The newly arrived guest, being offered the little piece of paper, and presumably having heard the consultation, wrote on it this brief inscription — 'John Holmes, frère de mon frère.'

"The statement, however felicitous under the circumstances, would not bear more than a general acceptance as to the facts. Few brothers were less alike in looks, and in habits. The elder brother was born to live among cheery social groups. The younger brother, while the more distinguished and noticeable in appearance of the two, was in the last degree self-withdrawing and modest, more than content to be held by the world at arm's length, yet capable of the most devoted and unselfish loyalty to the few intimates he loved.

"He was a graduate of Harvard and of the Harvard Law School, but never practised law, nor did he ever attempt any other profession, and lived alone with his aged mother. Dr. Holmes says, 'John cared for her in the most tender way, and it almost broke his heart to part with her. She was a daughter to him, she said, and he fondly hoped that love and care could keep her frail life to the filling of a century.' She lived to the age of ninety-three."

Mr. Higginson continues: —

"I do not suppose there was ever a moment in John Holmes's peaceful existence when he could really have been said to envy his more famous brother. When Emerson once said of him, 'John

Holmes represents humor, while his elder brother stands for wit,' he really placed the younger the higher of the two. The most commonplace event, the most uninteresting tramp who wandered through the little street was enough to feed John Holmes's thoughts, and to supply his conversation with spice."

It is a sorrowful thing that he could not have finished his life in the house where he was born; it would have been so fitting a frame for him. But unfortunately that was not possible. After Mrs. Holmes's death the house was acquired by the College and later was pulled down to make way for modern college buildings. Mr. Holmes moved with the old housekeeper to the little house owned by her on Appian Way, where he had three rooms for his own use, and lived there surrounded by Miss Tolman's cats and birds for the rest of his life.

Mr. Holmes wrote for the *Harvard Book* an account of old Hollis Hall and a very vivid sketch of an old-time Commencement. He abridged this for a little book published in connection with the Hospital Fair, giving an imaginary boy's account of the ceremonies, and from this I cannot resist quoting later on.

He wrote a review of Paige's *History of Cambridge* for the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the chapter on Cambridge in the *History of Middlesex County*, and these, I believe, were his only adventures in print.

Cambridge and Harvard College were his chosen field of reminiscence, although he had been to Europe: once in his college days, again in 1872, when he was sixty years old, with Mr. and Mrs. Lowell, and in 1882.

Mr. Lowell recalls that, when he himself was again in Paris, the little woman in the kiosque where he bought his newspapers, at once asked after Mr. Holmes, as did everybody else. She had a tame sparrow he used to bring cake to. "Ah," she exclaimed, "qu'il etait bon! Tout bon! Ce n'est que les bons qui aiment les animaux! Et ce monsieur, comment il les aimait!"

This was surely true, for the only book I read to him that he did not like was Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey.* His indignation at the constant beating and prodding of poor Modestine overflowed at every page.

He was too modest and self-effacing to care to appear much in print, although he was fond of old reminiscences in private talk; and this brings me back to his account of the old-time Commencement, with its tents and booths and all sorts of unacademic diversions and gayeties.

"I don't suppose there's anything quite equal to Commencement. First, you know, the Sunday *before*, after the sermon in the afternoon, the minister gives notice to carry home the psalm-books and cushions to such as have 'em, and most everybody takes something in their hands, and that kind of begins Commencement, though it *is* Sunday; and I think the old folks are about as much pleased as the young ones, though they don't show it so much. Then Monday old Leonard Hunnewell marks out the places for the tents, just as solemn as if they was so many graves, and the boys always make it out there's agoing to be more tents than there ever was before. Then Tuesday afternoon the joists and boards and old sails come, and they begin to build the tents, and they keep on workin' at 'em in the night. Then when it comes mornin' there's the tents, the most of 'em on the Common, right in front of the colleges, and then there's one or two big ones out in the direction of the Episcopal Church, and one up at the corner on West Cambridge road. The lowest down tents is about opposite Massachusetts, and the furthest up comes pretty near the little three-cornered Common. Then from the tents down to the Court House there's stands just outside the sidewalk, with candy and toys and every sort of thing. The children 's thick enough down there. I've seen something there they called ice cream, come from Boston, I suppose. It was dreadful dear.

"Then the first thing you know there's the Light-horse comes with their trumpets. They come with the Governor and then, about nine o'clock the great procession comes with music. The women has been crowdin' in to get seats in the meetin'us beforehand, and when the procession comes into the meetin'us its just as full as it can hold, every corner of it. Then down in the market place it's all full of carts with watermelons and peaches, and lots er folks coming and going. Then at Capt. Stimson's house, where the First Parish Church stands now, they let rooms for the shows, and I saw Punch and Judy once, and the fat baby and a cage of reptiles. They keep it up all day on the Common and pretty well all night, and all the next day and night. Oh, there can't be anything like it anywhere. . .

For the graduates inside the College grounds there was always a bountiful supply of plum cake, which was not approved by the Faculty, and an order to suppress it nearly caused a rebellion.

"The tents," said Mr. Holmes, "were open on the western side and, having opposite them various stands and shows, made a street, which by nightfall was paved with watermelon-rinds, peach-stones, and various débris, on a ground of straw — all flavored with rum and tobacco smoke. The atmosphere thus created in the interests of literature was to the true devotee of Commencement what the flavor of the holocaust was to the pious ancient."

He also records the wonders of Harvard Square. Among them, "The College House, which fifty years ago was occupied by the Law professor. The number of pupils was small, and we have seen most, or all of them, perched together on the fence in front.

"In Harvard Square also stood the old Court House, where the judges of the Superior Court held their sessions, escorted by the sheriff and attendants with great commotion.

"On this great day," says Mr. Holmes, "the villagers quit their gray, unpainted houses, as if they were in flames. Children get the start. Austere men who combat the world and its pleasures go circuitously and drop casually and unconsciously into the throng. Suitors and sued, amateurs of litigation who have had their losses, the many who dote on the dread forms of the criminal process, poor debtors who know every spider in the old jail — all these contribute to the variety of the crowd. The 'scholars,' to use the popular term some fifty years since, are hurrying to the scene of action, the banyan, such as Prescott wore at Bunker Hill, floating wide behind them as they run.

"Bradish stands at the door of his tavern, grave and portly. His cue newly bound with black ribbon hangs perpendicular like a pendulum stopped by an earthquake. The lawyers were then, as they are now, the gladiators of a better civilization.

"In 1815 the courts were removed to East Cambridge, and the Court House ceased from its former functions.

"Lyceum lectures and debates were begun here about 1830, and held their ground with very considerable tenacity. The public finally became satiated and dropped off in something like a comatose state. The great variety of subjects and the distractions of a social surrounding left, it is to be feared, a rather nebulous result on the general mind.

"Cambridge had been for many years remarkably exempt from fires. From near 1812 we recall, from hearsay or observation, no serious fire. The town, therefore, was obliged to borrow excitement on this score from neighboring calamities, and to judge by the demonstrations, the sufferers themselves could hardly have felt the situation more intensely than our citizens. The parish bell was immediately set going, nor ceased while any faint gleam of light appeared on the horizon. Nearly all the male inhabitants cried 'fire!' incessantly for some half-hour. The 'scholars' lent their lungs to assist the town. The engine rushed madly, if heavily, out into space, and returned. One got to feel as if this were a beneficial operation. The alarm bell actually suggested security. When it rang out with the greatest vigor, and for the longest time, the householder knew that the fire was very distant, and that our conscientious citizens could not relax their efforts while the flames appeared or were reflected on the sky.

"But in October, 1839, a fire actually occurred within our own precincts, which consumed three houses and a barn, and, as usual, threatened much more destruction. At the beginning of the following winter, a suspicion arose that incendiaries were preparing to repeat, on a comprehensive scale, the calamity of October.

"We can recollect no cause assigned for the new alarm, and possibly the imagination worked with more effect, uncontrolled by spoken evidence.

"It was soon found that a citizens' patrol was necessary to protect the town. It was arranged, and fixed its headquarters in the old Court House. We recollect only a tendency to hilarity that pervaded the organization, at variance with the imminent hazard which they labored to avert. Walking, watching, and friendly converse occupied the midnight hours. Consciousness of merit was the poor and honorable reward of our exertions. No refreshments were furnished to dilute or vitiate this noble sensation.

"We infer the greatness of the impending danger from the great and general effort made to avert it. And it is a memorable fact that so extensive and desperate a confederation of incendiaries should have been entirely crushed by our administration. Perfect incombustibility seemed to prevail during this period, and in a community too where one man in twenty was a probable Guy Faux.

"There is always one drawback on precaution—that it cuts off the very evidence that should justify it. The patrol of 1840 was subject to this inconvenience. Only one arrest was made. It was of a man who at a very early hour of the morning was detected carrying incendiary material toward the college. He was seized, with his lantern, and his various pyrotechnics carried to the Court House and subjected to severe examination. He proved to be a professional incendiary, i.e., a fire-maker in the college. His control, though in a measure *pro forma*, gave an aspect of efficiency to the patrol and added to its amount of strength. The dullest intellect perceived what might have occurred, had the prosecuted been one of the real confederates, and had no patrol existed to arrest his deadly career.

"No monument or inscription commemorates the services of that time, not even a bronze extinguisher of minute size. Among the members of the patrol rheumatism, coughs, and catarrh may have done their work, but no voice has proclaimed the fact. Wide-awake beneficence disdains to stir sleeping gratitude, but any member of the patrol may proudly say, pointing to the unconsumed town, '*Circumspice.*'"

As I have said, Mr. Howells persuaded Mr. Holmes to write a review of Paige's *History of Cambridge*, which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. This was evidently a congenial task, as the opening shows. "If we New Englanders admire ourselves in a representative way for the slow and painful displacement of nature, for our cities, towns, inclosures, and all that belongs to our rectilinear life, what shall we say of the man who by one touch of his art, sweeps away the whole incumbrance in a moment — who, in our Cambridge of today makes the pine to soar again in the Market Place, the dandelion to pave the dusty Main Street with gold, the wolf to utter his hungry howl, where now is the almshouse, the wild pigeon to coo love and peace at the Divinity School, and the possum to play his innocent tricks at the City Hall?

"The antiquarian does all this and without cost or damage but to himself. He finds us blinking at an uncertain future or weary with a commonplace present, and promises to show us the past, where we may walk at leisure."

Mr. Holmes then takes up the first settlement of Newtowne, "which was designed for the citadel of the new colony, perhaps for its capital.

"The site was selected as a fit place for a fortified town in 1630, and the fortifications which were a 'pallysadoe' — with such unsparing force did our ancestors spell the word — and ditch, were apparently completed in 1632. If the founding of Rome should occur to the reader, he need not repel it too eagerly as an exaggeration. It is probable that no Remus could have slighted our pallysadoe. If he had, our Romulus would have given him half a day in the stocks, or a fine of five shillings."

In a sketch of Mr. Craigie, Mr. Holmes gives a glimpse of Cambridge in later days. "Just now, when the old memories of Christ Church are being awakened, it is not amiss to recall one of those who take their final rest beneath its shadow. In my early boyhood I occasionally heard the name of Andrew Craigie, but never explored so far as to become acquainted with his residence, which was the present Longfellow House. I propose no more than to give the facts that casually reached me concerning him, as I remember them — a legendary rather than a historical notice. I think that he was spoken of as having been a surgeon in the Continental army, and that after the war was closed, he had purchased government securities, which rose rapidly in value after the new constitution was established. He became rich enough to purchase the confiscated estate of one of the Vassals, and was able to continue the handsome style of living of his predecessors. He married, when quite old, or elderly, the beautiful Betsey Shaw, but the many years of valuable experience which he contributed to the common stock do not seem to have added to the general fund of matrimonial happiness.

"Well would it have been for him if his friends could have said to him, 'Thou hast no speculation in thine eyes.' But he had, and a great deal of it. His plan was to develop Lechmere's Point, called in my younger days, 'The Pint,' and bring into the market the land he had secured there. The new road to 'The Colleges,' now Cambridge Street, the bridge to Boston, still called Craigie's Bridge, the removal to the 'Pint' of the Court House and Jail, were all parts of this plan.

"The embargo in 1807 covered Boston and its dependencies like an extinguisher. But apart from that, Mr. Craigie's plans and those of his contemporary schemers — the making Cambridgeport a great emporium of trade, the Concord turnpike, etc. — were, even if rational in their conception, premature by some forty years. I remember in my own boyhood the scanty population of the lower 'Port' outside of the main street, with the brick blocks planted here and there in the solitude, like seed for new settlements. Concord turnpike and Craigie's road also, each offered a retreat to which the austere recluse, shunning the face of man, might retire with no fear of intrusion. The toll which was to repay the building was found represented by the funeral knell of departed funds.

"It is now that we come naturally to Mr. Craigie as a debtor, the legendary character in which we have mostly heard of him. Overwhelmed with judgments, the sly capias in the pocket of the constable waiting for him, he remembered that every man's house is his castle, and retired to this fortress allowed him by law. Inside his house he was safe from arrest. Whether he could venture outside upon his own premises, or was confined to his four walls, we cannot learn. As it can do him no harm, and is more picturesque, I prefer the first supposition.

"It is a fine bit of mediævalism that we Old Cambridge folk have, and we ought to be proud of it. Here is a man with nothing against him but a large pecuniary balance, liable to capture, falling back on his 'Castle,' to use the term contained in the legal apothegm. The towers, walls, portcullis, barbican, appear at once before us. But to quit the fanciful — Mr. Craigie had every right in the world, except to go out of his own house. To that act a *quasi* penalty was attached. Does it not give a new interest to the Longfellow House, that a genuine debtor of the old school has looked with longing eyes on the free and solvent Charles carrying his punctual dues to ocean, and on the fair Brighton hills where the only capias is that awaiting the cows at night? Did he ever venture forth at evening, seeing a constable and capias in every bush? We accept the question readily, and wish that we could answer it, but tradition fails here.

"But if law shut Mr. Craigie up on week days, religion came to set him free on Sunday. On that day he was free to go abroad, and I presume used his liberty to attend at Christ Church, then open for worship. How long this state of duress lasted, whether to his death or not, I cannot say.

"Somewhere about the year 1820, going over one Saturday afternoon to play with a boy at a house standing on or near the site of the present Law School, I saw a movement at the door of the church. Some half-dozen people were in motion. I do not remember whether the bell was tolled. This was the scant, lonely funeral of Mr. Andrew Craigie.

"These notes and reminiscences are addressed, aside, to only the few experts or esoterics in Cambridge antiquities — people who, if asked to answer the following questions, would answer readily and perhaps with some resentment at the doubt of their knowledge implied by the inquiry.

"Where was the old Court House? The old Jail? The Market House? Where was the College woodyard? Where were the old hay-scales? Where was the window from which little Joe Hill saw Lord Percy's reinforcement pass by? Where was the little brook that ran over gravel toward the Charles and, like the two princes, was stifled in its bed?"

Mr. Howells says, "Lowell had often talked to me about John Holmes, celebrating his peculiar humor with that affection which was not always so discriminating, so that Holmes was one of the first Cambridge men I knew. He was then living in the charming old colonial house where he and his brother were born.

"The genius loci was limping about the pleasant mansion with the rheumatism which expressed itself to his friends in a resolute smile — a short, stout figure, helped out with a cane, and a grizzled head with features formed to win the heart rather than the eye of the beholder.

"He held his native town in an idolatry which was not blind, but which was none the less devoted because he was aware of her droll points, and her weak points. I was not her son, but he felt that this was my misfortune more than my fault, and he seemed more and more to forgive it. In the process of time he came so far to trust his experience of me that he formed the habit of giving me an annual supper. This was after he moved to Appian Way. Some days before this event he would appear in my study, and with divers delicate and tentative approaches would say he should like to ask my family to an oyster supper with him.

"'But you know, I have n't a house of my own to ask you to, and I should like to give you the supper *here*.'

"When I had agreed to this suggestion and the day was fixed — 'Well then,' he said, 'I will send up a few oysters.'

"On the day appointed the fishman would come with several gallons of oysters, and in the evening the giver of the feast would appear with a lank oilcloth bag, sagged by some bottles of wine. There was always a bottle of red wine and sometimes a bottle of champagne, and he had taken the precaution to send some crackers beforehand, so that the supper should be as entirely of his own giving as possible. He was forced to let us do the cooking and to supply the cold slaw, and perhaps he indemnified himself for putting us to these charges by the vast superfluity of his oysters, with which we remained inundated for days.

"He did not care to eat many himself but seemed content to fancy giving us a pleasure."

Mr. Holmes's chief diversion was playing whist with his friends James Russell Lowell, Mr. Estes Howe, Mr. Robert Carter. He never could see the charm of having more than a small inner circle. His natural love of seclusion was increased by a chronic lameness which hampered him at times all through his life. He diversified the monotony of his quiet existence by little visits during the summer — only a few days at a time — to Mr. Charles Storey in Brookline, Mr. Waldo Higginson at Cohasset, and Dr. Ware at West Rindge. These brief excursions were treated with great ceremony, like a foreign journey, and the return to the quiet of Appian Way was most humorously commented on.

In refusing an invitation to Mr. Storey's in Brookline on account of the pain and uneasiness in the knee, he says, —

"Tell the girls, as they naturally like gayety, that I would have entertained them with valuable information more than sixty years old, and particularly would have given them, had they asked me, valuable genealogies of the early settlers — and we all know that nothing is more entertaining to young people than genealogy.

"I might possibly, if asked, have sung to them some simple compositions of Cotton Mather and other early poets of the Puritan time. I never sing unless asked to, and being never asked to, I never sing."

But if Mr. Holmes never sang, he loved to play simple airs, and especially hymn tunes, on his piano, all the more as his eyesight failed.

Unquestionably, in spite of his genial nature, there were hours of loneliness and depression. After a "monstrous, incredible" hot day in June, and the heat of Appian Way is truly "monstrous," he writes, "I am today little better than a residuary legatee to myself as I was before this heat."

And to his friend Charles Storey he writes, begging him to come to see him, —

"I have laboriously kept up the illusion of employment, and I won't say but that with a little philosophic reflection I have made out a fair schedule of circumstances. I know it is a great thing to be well — to be able to take my modest walks, etc., but beyond a pretty sober contentment I can't say much and that does n't prompt one to call eagerly on his friends to share the sunshine with him.

"If you will call on Saturday I shall hope to have a happy day in place of a moderately contented one, for between us both I am sure we should get up a pleasant high-low-rity. I meant to say hilarity.

"We shall, as you say, have our hands full to put the world to rights after so long an interval.

"I 've had a good deal of trouble with the Soudan and the Russians and what not, and have felt heavily the want of my colleague.

"I should n't mind to have you, if you will, sit in committee of one on those South American rowdies, on Cleveland's administration since our last session, and on 'Things in General,' which without binding you to any particular course of inquiry will stimulate your ambition to be well up on everything.

"You know I have been agricultural on the scale of an inch to a mile, and won't you and I have a right-down farming session when we foregather.

"By the way I wonder what the price of good hard wood is now at centres like Fitchburg.

"As agri(and horti)culturist I was pleased with the late snow-fall. The something, you know, that they say is fertilizing in snow (a nitrate or something), call it nitrate of potash, will be good for your early vegetables.

"I ought to report to you that the crop of hand-organs is very plentiful this spring, and quality on the whole improved."

After another short visit he writes Mr. Storey, "Everything has been pretty quiet here since you left. No banditti seen this side of the Cambridge hills.

"I found Cambridge just where I left it, running over with learning of all kinds and facing the weather with a placid countenance. Winter just now is grimly retreating with his face to the foe —

his icicle beard rapidly diminishing. He seems to say to himself 'I've given it to 'em this time.' I hope that you are well and having a pleasant time, the dull weather notwithstanding.

"What a blizzard we are having today! The big elm opposite my window stretches his brawny arms out to our old friend Boreas and bids him come on, and they are having it out in good style.

"Cambridge Common is as wild as a Tartar steppe today, and a great deal more convenient for the adventurer to try his luck on.

"Some old people here are a little apprehensive the Russians may work round this way from Afghanistan, but I tell them it is impossible.

"As evening closes in, I recall the cheerful board, the smoke, the preparations for deep debate. Well, we did n't neglect our opportunities. We settled matters up well. As a consequence my mind has been at ease. I have hardly thought of the Czar, and not once of the Soudan or of Bismarck."

In another letter to Mr. Storey he says, —

"It has been rather a heavy time, precious little exhilaration and a general slowness.

"Miss Mary Ware wished me to go up to Doctor Goodale's room at the Museum and urged the elevator for me on the score of my age, and I complied and took possession of a chair placed on a moderate sized ascending surface. Then an enclosure of iron was developed, and some of the small boys remarked 'Behind the bars,' thus giving a criminal aspect to my transient confinement. But the man hauled vigorously and I vanished with just enough of a halo of guilt to please the innocent spectator.

"Yesterday was the annual fête at the Cambridge Casino (established two years) and I thought I would look in upon them at evening a moment at the dance, and moralize over the manner in which one may change his relation to that amusement, and retire as after a draught of hop beer.

"Being a subscriber, I took a schoolgirl daughter of my opposite neighbor and went, after the supper which, secundum program, was to appear at half-past six.

"The table was not yet cleared of the débris, and by tipping a waiter I procured a ration for my guest (also for self) and then threw my whole weight on society, telling my female comrade that she might amuse herself with her cotemporaries. I found some acquaintances who had been sometime out of swaddling clothes, and to my great surprise passed a pleasant evening.

"The Casino is on the lower road to Mt. Auburn, close to the river. We were in the Boat House where the dance came off after the tables were cleared; but there was an outside with chairs, close to the water, whence we could look on and across the river, not only at the long row of lights very prettily seen over the marsh, but also at a sedate display of mild fireworks on the opposite bank which was quite pretty. When my comrade had to return for a lesson of some sort, to be learned, I saw her home, and then, like a venerable pleasure-seeking Ulysses, I returned to the gardens of Calypso. I looked knowingly and superiorly on at the dance, as if to say 'the art is not what it was in my time,' and several times actually detected myself in the act of keeping tune with my foot to the music. I think if the choice had been immediate execution, or to tread a measure, that I might possibly have danced — but under the most stringent protest, you understand. It was like a man's brushing against a newly painted house — I brought off a little of the gay coloring and found myself somewhat improved in spirits."

After one of his short visits, he writes to Charles Storey, —

"I found my native place in excellent posture to receive a (very slightly) wearied philosopher. There was no concourse in her streets, no frivolous social explosion on the Common to disturb my sober approach to home. No stentorian cry of Blueberries or Bananies, no melancholy chant of O'Rags was heard in A. W. The houses had mostly their eyes closed in their summer sleep. The most retiring of men might have enjoyed the entire unobservedness with which I entered my domicile, and the solitude after arrival.

"Not so my arrival from West Rindge on Friday at about 2 P.M. After struggling with my plethoric valise from the quite subterranean track at Porter's or rather Cambridge Station, I emerged on the platform to meet at once our huge expressman of North Cambridge, Hayes, some times called the Infant, some six feet four in length and not lightly built. He extended both hands in welcome and cordially invited me to ascend his express standing at the door. I sounded him on the score of remuneration (as the conveyance was professional) but found that it was hospitality, pure and simple, and so was toted to my own door. I suppose that technically I was 'express matter,' but that did n't disturb my philosophy.

"It had in a certain degree the effect of a public testimonial, to be thus received at the very portal of the station. All I can think of, is my year's service in behalf of my country in the Harvard Washington Corps. If the attention was in recognition of that, it was very prettily and delicately done, for as an ex-soldier I was carrying 'baggage,' and to send a baggage wagon to meet me on my march and relieve me was as neat a reminder of my own past services and fatigues as could well be devised. (I would n't have a hint of this pass your lips. A mistake on such a point would be attributed to the most absurd vanity.)

"Yes! If the authorities of my native town really devised this attention it does them credit. As I was no more than private, a barouche and four or anything of that sort would have been embarrassing; but a baggage wagon! It was a very neat idea (always if it were a public attention)."

To Mr. Storey, after a trip to the seashore: —

"I don't care much for change nowadays, but I went with our folks of the house to Nantasket, and have swaggered about it very considerably as a bit of foreign travel, but our Cambridge folks get so rusty with vacation solitude, — or perhaps I should say so green, — that you can stuff them with anything almost.

"They get in a manner childish and from disuse their articulation is impaired. When I began about Nantasket, the word tickled them immensely, and they kept practising on it to themselves, as our friend (what's his name) does 'the Salwannas where the war is.'

"I should think Old Cambridge was never so emptied of its inhabitants before. The college vacuum alone would make a noticeable solitude."

Ten days later he writes, —

"Since the afternoon I made you a flying visit, I have been in the social line almost entirely limited to the company of John Holmes, an old graduate of (if you will allow me to say so) about your time. This old gent is perhaps rather a *redactor temporis acti* than a *laudator*, but at the same time designates the period since 1832 as margin, and sometimes as leavings. He often hints at a comrade he has over your way who is a capital auxiliary —

dives into the past at any depth, and always brings up something worth having. Do enquire over there, and see if any such old gent is to be found in your neighborhood.

"You are the only fellow I know who has held to his anchorage solidly and creditably and not migrated for the sake of migration. It looks rather flighty, does n't it, to see a lot of sober householders, as with us in Cambridge, for example, pack up and decamp as if a Mongol army were at hand, and that at a time when their surroundings are at their pleasantest.

"It seems a reproach to the absentees when you behold the fruits of the tropics, and the ice of the poles offering themselves to the scanty remnant in Appian Way, for example.

"But it is no use to set up an opposition. The fugitives may be (between you and me) weak in judgment, but they are strong in numbers, and we won't waste our time in moralizing over the frivolities of a world whose weak points you and I have long since found out, and with mutual satisfaction have laid before each other.

"You might now to some purpose take a lantern à la Diogenes to find a man with in Cambridge! The genus seems almost extinct here. If two men meet by chance, they embrace with tears, and if five should come together, the Cambridge papers speak of a festival.

"Everyone seems anxious to establish an alibi.

A small party of boys came through A. W. last evening with a drum, and an anonymous wind instrument, and it was pleasant to see other small boys flock to the excitement and march alongside with exhilaration.

"Some think this was a device of the City Government to cheer the depressed and deserted citizens — others, that it is to show the evil-intentioned of all sorts that the town — now consisting of some six or seven grown people — is prepared for invasion.

"What can a man say impressive or amusing about a vacuum? All he can tell is how many had to be emptied out to make the vacuum.

"If the Universalist Church had n't been moved in three pieces up the main street in the Port, I think some of the few left here would have perished of mental atrophy, but that has kept them up in a feeble way.

"There is something fanciful about it, too, to the old inhabitant; it suggests as far as it goes the old town with its day and evening quiet. It was very accommodating in my friends to evacuate the premises unanimously and simultaneously to afford me this picture of the past.

"What a brave old boy are you to go to the mountains. I hope they pumped up their best air for you, and that you made the most of it. 'My name,' you can now say, 'is Charles W. Norval from the Grampian Hills.' There is nothing more rheumatic, crampy, sciatical than a mountain. I wonder you went there."

Any one who is familiar with the solitude of a Cambridge summer will fully appreciate Mr. Holmes's meditations on it, and especially A. W. as he called it, where, if two cats crossed the street, all the neighbors rushed to the windows.

"I like to sit on a bench in the Common in summer," he said, "and drink in the east wind with its fine old odor of cellarage."

To Miss Grace Norton he writes, —

"Your name before me reminds me what a graceless 'old gent' (if you will allow that expression) I must appear to be, but you must know that I am delicate on the matter of locomotion. Don't shock Appian Way by suggesting a coupé. I met Miss Grace Ashburner in September one day, and persuaded her to sit pastorally on a bench in the Common, and soon after that was laid up, quite a long time since.

"I have been for some time in a most tempestuous ocean of circumstances with a tremendous cross sea running which has very nearly thrown me on my beam-ends. I borrow these terms from the shipping reports to suit my distressed circumstances. An old gent more exercised with various activities than I of late it would be hard to find. I feel more like Talleyrand just now than any other historical personage — I mean so very diplomatic.

"I am a tempest-tossed man. 'T is now the season of Taxes hateful word. It is the time for small collections and large disbursements — the time for expeditions to the metropolis, agitation, general disquiet."

John Holmes and the melancholy Jaques would have had a wonderful time moralizing together on life in Appian Way and its neighborhood.

"The world is n't what it used to be, eh? It needs one or two philosophers who are just now somewhat in retirement to do a little adjusting, eh? What do you say? Though for my part I am willing to let it go on experimenting until it gets wiser.

"I have no news to send you. The horse was killed so long ago by the pendent wire carrying the charge of a bigger wire, that I can't offer it as a novelty. Have you ridden in the electric cars? Have you been to the theatre within three months, as a man whom I know has? Have you been to lectures on Babylon and Babylonian excavations and relics, as a man I know has? If you only lived here we would go to lectures (open to the public) till we ran over with knowledge.

"I took cold last night from my open window with all the bed-clothes off, and my interior by 5 o'clock this morning reminded me of a ropewalk manned by diligent workers.

"The solitude here is more marked methinks than last year. One kind of population is plenty at No. 5 A.W. *viz.*, cats. They seem an Ecumenical Council. Rose, a great favorite with Miss, disappeared from Saturday night till this forenoon, when she sauntered in at the front gate with that irrelevant air that cats have, and showed little emotion at the great joy she caused. She is blasé and metropolitan in her ways. She came up and took possession of my chair, but soon relinquished it and lounged out of my room, looking for a larger sphere of action and contemplation."

In answer to a question from Mr. Higginson, Mr. Holmes replies, —

"The aunt in question was old, unwieldy and lame. Consequently, instead of a filial eagerness to accompany and assist the aunt on her return home, and a pleasant fraternal competition for office, the tendency of both sons, William the elder and Dunham, was — auntrifugal. They both shunned that particular by-path of duty. So that when Mrs. H. said, 'William, it is time for you to go home with your aunt,' William immediately added, 'Dunham, don't you hear your mother?' Dunham was never known to give William any credit for relinquishing his right of primogeniture."

Mr. Waldo Higginson was one of the Trustees of the Harvard Divinity School, and as he lived at a distance Mr. Holmes took great pleasure in considering himself his deputy in Cambridge and in sending frequent bulletins.

"The School comes on well. We had a Babylonian the other evening, preached in Chaldee, with a fine presumption that he was understood by the School."

And again, a few months later, —

"Please tell Waldo (we must tell him something about the School, I suppose) — tell him — well — that the School has got the sniffles, and you can hear them sneezing and blowing in a still night, a quarter of a mile off — and they are just as controversial about medicine as theology, and have their Sudorites and Antis, who don't speak, but send each other calumnious notes.

"One fellow under the influence of sniffles and snake-root, which (the infusion) he takes in great quantities, has relapsed into Calvinism, but the board has cut off his rations, and he is coming round at last accounts."

And so these pleasant, friendly, rambling notes went on and on, even when his eyesight was too dim to see the lines.

Old age he kept wonderfully at bay by his jaunty bearing and undaunted courage. Reluctantly giving up an excursion, he says, "Our old friend Weather dropped in and told me that considering my age he advised me not to go. He should n't wonder if we had rain.

"'As for my age,' said I; but he smiled.

"'I can't stop,' said he; 'I've got a picnic to give a ducking to. Good morning,' and he was off."

Mr. Holmes rather resented help and gloried in being able to get off a Broadway car before it had quite stopped, "thus redeeming my reputation for vigor, after having been handed down steps by ladies and the like. Having landed without accident, I walked off with perhaps something of a juvenile air, wielding the valise as if a pleasure, rather than burden."

He thought nothing when nearly blind of going out in the winter evenings to see a sick friend, regardless of snow and ice. He repudiated any suggestion of wearing overshoes. "Wet feet — nonsense. When we were boys our feet were always wet through from morning till night. We thought nothing of it."

When he could not read the name on a trolley-car, he would board one car after another, getting on and off recklessly until he hit on the right one.

So quietly and gently he entered the Valley of the Shadow, often forgetting the present, and living in old memories with his father and mother, and more and more loving to hear some one play the old hymn-tunes on the piano.

"I want L. to come and read the Bible to me."

"Oh, let me," I said, "I should love to."

"No," he said, "that would n't do, you are not orthodox enough. I want L."

And then suddenly came the end, and we could say again with Judge Hoar: —

Whenever you take the journey
That leads through the shadows dim
Please say to the One who sent you here,
That we 're much obliged to him.

ALICE M. LONGFELLOW.

THE LETTERS OF JOHN HOLMES

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND EARLY LIFE

Nobody could be more surprised than John Holmes himself, could he know that his letters were collected into a volume; for no one was less aware than he of their strange originality and unpremeditated charm. The shyest of men, he led a life so devoid of events that he furnished only the slightest material for a biography. And yet he had the capacity, common only to original persons, of taking in even the most trivial experience, of transmuting it through his imagination until it seemed a part of himself, and of stamping on his description of it his unmistakable individuality.

The public hardly knew him at all. During most of his life he passed among strangers as "the brother of his brother"; but among his friends — and he had many of them, as these letters will show — his depth of affection, his gift of intimacy, not less than his playfulness, drollery, and unquenchable humor, made him desired and beloved. Lowell, the lifelong friend of both brothers, used to speak of John as the rarer.

John Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 29, 1812. His father, Abiel Holmes, had been settled as pastor of the First Congregational Church since 1791. His mother, Sarah Wendell, was the only daughter of the Honorable Oliver Wendell, of Boston. The first Holmes in America, the great-grandfather of Abiel, was among the founders of the village of Woodstock, Connecticut, in 1686 — an energetic man, who ran a saw-mill and a fulling-mill. His grandson, David, served as a captain in the Old French War and as an army surgeon in the Revolution.

The first wife of Abiel Holmes was Mary, daughter of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College. "The Reverend Abiel Holmes," writes Mr. John T. Morse, Jr., "was a clergyman who taught the old-fashioned Calvinism with all its horrors, and yet, apart from his religious creed, was a gentleman of humanity and cultivation."[1] The second Mrs. Holmes, the mother of John and Oliver, born in 1768, remembered how, when she was a little girl, she was hurried off from Boston, then occupied by the British soldiers, to Newburyport. "Her traits," continues Mr. Morse, "were very different from those of her husband. She was a bright, vivacious woman, of small figure, and sprightly manners. Being also very cheerful and social, and fond of dropping in upon her neighbors, and withal of sympathetic and somewhat emotional temperament, so that she readily fell in with the mood of her friend, whether for tears or for laughter, she was a very popular lady, whom every one greeted kindly."[1] Mrs. Holmes came of old Puritan stock, tracing back through various ancestors to Thomas Dudley, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, whose daughter was Anne Bradstreet, the "Tenth Muse." The Oliver, the Jackson, and the Quincy families were among her connections.

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[1] J. T. Morse, Jr., *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (Boston, 1896), I, 15.

The old gambrel-roofed house, dating from 1718, which Parson Holmes occupied, belonged to his father-in-law, Judge Wendell, with whom he lived until the judge's death in 1812, when it became the property of Mrs. Holmes. Situated thirty or forty rods north of Harvard College Yard, near the site of the present Harvard Law School, its western windows faced the old road to Lexington and Concord. Just across the Cambridge Common rose the Washington Elm on the farther side. Many years later Dr. Holmes thus described it: "The gambrel-roofed house, though stately enough for college dignitaries and scholarly clergymen, was not one of those Tory Episcopal-church-goer's strongholds. The honest mansion makes no pretensions. Accessible, comfortable, respectable, and even in its way dignified, but not imposing, not a house for His Majesty's Councillors, or the Right Reverend

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[1] John T. Morse, Jr., *Life and Letters of Oliver Wendell Holmes* (Boston, 1896), I, 15.

Successor of him who had not where to lay his head, for something like a hundred and fifty years it has stood in its lot, and seen generations of men come and go like leaves of the forest. It was a great happiness to have been born in an old house, haunted by such recollections, with harmless ghosts walking its corridors, and that vast territory of four or five acres around it, to give a child the sense that he was born to a noble principality. I should hardly be quite happy if I could not recall, at will, the old house with the long entry and the white chamber, where I wrote the first verses that made me known ["Old Ironsides"], and the little parlor, and the study, and the old books, in uniforms as varied as those of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company used to be, and the front yard with the stars of Bethlehem, and the dear faces to be seen no more there or anywhere on this earthly place of farewells."

Springing thus from roots which ran deep into the early times of Connecticut and of Boston, John Holmes inherited what we should now call the unmixed Yankee tradition. Everything tended to develop in him the strongest local affections. The old house that was his home linked him with the past. The village in which he grew up — for Cambridge was then only a village, still small enough for its inhabitants to know one another, at least by sight — gave him that sense of belonging to an entire and homogeneous community which the

THE GAMBREL-ROOFED HOUSE

dwellers in cities can never feel. He knew not only all the Cantabrigians, but also, in a boy's way, all the haunts of the place — the brooks and ponds, the spots on the river Charles where the best skating was to be found in winter and the best fishing at other seasons; and long before he became an undergraduate, he was familiar with the academic festivals of Harvard College. For then the college was Cambridge to a degree undreamed of today, and many of the townspeople profited — as they do now — in one way or another from the institution. Those were the days, too, when all the citizens took a genuine pride in having the oldest and foremost of American colleges in their town; when a professor — there were only half a dozen of them — was regarded with reverence if not with awe, and the President was a person of almost Olympian dignity. Very parochial must the Cambridge life of the first quarter of the nineteenth century seem to us who are now caught up in the rush and change and cosmopolitanism of a distracted and dubious generation. Ixion on his wheel, glancing in his swift whirling at the immutable Pyramids, may aptly symbolize our attitude toward a past which thought itself grounded in immutability.

Of John Holmes's boyhood I find no written trace; but we can infer something about it from allusions in his letters. Only one anecdote has survived. When he was five years old his brother Oliver, two and a half years his senior, took him to witness the last hanging in Cambridge. The scene was the Gallows Lot on Jones's Hill, which slopes north of Linnæan Street. This indulgence in the morbid love of horror, common to children, brought the older brother a sound scolding.

John passed through the usual juvenile education of Cambridge and, at the age of sixteen, he entered Harvard College in the class of 1832. Among his classmates were several youths who achieved distinction in later life — Josiah G. Abbott, Harvard Overseer and Member of Congress; Henry W. Bellows, Unitarian minister and, during the Civil War, fervent patriot; Charles T. Brooks, also a Unitarian minister, poet, translator of *Faust;* George Ticknor Curtis, legal writer, biographer of Webster, authority on constitutional history; and John S. Dwight, musical critic and diffuser of the love of music in the United States. Of these, Dwight became an intimate, and another classmate, Estes Howe, was a lifelong friend. During John's freshman year, his brother Oliver was a senior in the class of 1829, and during his own senior year E. Rockwood Hoar, another lifelong friend, was a freshman. John seems to have been one of those inconspicuous fellows who make up the majority of every college class. A fair student but not brilliant, quiet, shy, he was the delight of a few cronies, with whom he let himself out. If organized athletics had existed in his time, his smallish figure would not have recommended him for a crew.

After graduating in 1832 Holmes entered the Harvard Law School, where he pursued a desultory course of study, interrupted by sickness, until 1836. Then follows a blank year, after which he entered the law office of Loring and Dehon, who held an honorable position at the Boston Bar. We cannot think of him as a practising lawyer, nor did he stick long to the profession; but he loved the old legal phrases with which he used unexpectedly to heighten the comic effect of a droll bit of conversation. In 1839 he made a trip to Europe, of which he left no record. On returning home he settled in the old house with his mother, to whom he devoted himself as tenderly and as unremittingly as if she were his daughter. His father had died in 1837.

Now began the mature life of John Holmes, a life which continued for over fifty years, varying little in essentials, but deeply rooted in friendship and always revealing his sensitive heart and his fantastic humor. He was already a "ripe local man," saturated in Cambridge traditions and ways — a zealot for "oppidanism," as he playfully called love of one's native town. In spite of his shyness, he had a very sociable nature, which endeared him to his acquaintances in Cambridge and his relatives in Boston. Gradually there formed an inner circle of cronies, several of whom were his college contemporaries. Most famous among these was James Russell Lowell, seven years younger than Holmes, who immediately on leaving college plunged enthusiastically into Abolition and other reform movements. His zeal in these causes, combined with his great talent for poetry and his love of literature, made him an inspiring companion, and the fact that he was early drawn to John Holmes is an indication of the range of the latter's sympathies.

At the end of 1844 Lowell married Miss Maria White, of Watertown, and they spent that winter in Philadelphia, where he wrote articles for *Graham's Magazine*, the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, and the *Broadway Journal.* While he was there John Holmes wrote him the following letter, the first that has come to hand of their extensive correspondence:—

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *May* 19, 1845.

My dear Sir:—

Though I wish you home again, I don't wish you to come without receiving a letter from me, acknowledging your kindness in sending me a paper which I read with satisfaction.

I have frequently thought of writing without this reference to mutuality, but the little intercourse I have had with Cambridge society and the extreme meagreness of our chronicles and of my own individual experience, deterred me. My principal occupation the past season has been as engineer to an airtight stove, which I flatter myself I have conducted with commendable skill. Notwithstanding explosions and rumours of explosions among these powerful instruments of good or evil, I have sat the winter long, calm and immoveable, at that extremity of my stove where the door is, and at some doubtful periods nothing but the moral dignity of my position has compensated the risk incurred. I have often contemplated with seriousness a rigid cast-iron rose in the centre of the door above mentioned, not knowing but that the following moment I might bear a lively impression thereof upon my abdomen. On such occasions I thought of my country and the aid I might furnish to science (not botanical in particular) and remained stern and unmoved: I have thus in the end contributed my mite to the science of thermology (excuse the fabrication of a word). So closely are the spiritual and material allied here, that this simple structure of sheet-iron made, for a time, quite a "butt or bound" (Ol. Prec.) in my existence. A theoretical economy based upon the thing gave me placid satisfaction for a week or two after the purchase: by that time the economy was less brilliant, but the heat was intense and I had a large balance to make up from the previous winter, and now that winter is past, the economical theory is exploded, the stove is safe, I have been warm and am so far content. So much for my stove.

I rode round by your father's house a short time [ago] and looked with much satisfaction at the spot where I hope your cottage is to be.[1] I should like to have you a Cambridge householder as soon as may be. We have had I think more than the usual share of warm weather this spring, a pleasant invitation which Cambridge gives you and Mrs. Lowell to return to her.

I saw Carter a few days since — he seemed well and happy — he has spent the night with me twice this spring and we have played chess prodigiously but with extreme calmness of demeanour — Carter I think would charm the Brahmins and wise men of the east — his equable deportment alone would entitle him, I think, to attend their levees and soirées; he might give them lessons in their own geography and they repay in doctrinal matter; if they should persuade him into metempsychosis, I think he might reasonably assume that his soul had changed tenements so often, that tranquillity under all circumstances had been forced upon it by habit.

I hope to see yourself and Mrs. Lowell on here soon, and that on the first evening of your return there will be a Southwest wind and a rosy sunset — and with my best regards to you both, I am

Yours truly.

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[1] Elmwood, situated about a mile west of Harvard Square. Lowell never built the cottage mentioned, but on his return to Cambridge lived with his parents.

To J. R. Lowell

Brattleboro', *May* 27, 1846.
Rainy, Wind S.E.

My dear Sir: —

As you sent me a paper from foreign parts, to wit, Philadelphia, so I proceed at this time to send you a letter from among the outer barbarians who now surround me — to wit, the Brattleborienses. Yes, Sir, here I am with numerous other sojourners, all of us working our way by water through life, at least this portion of it. I presume that I have changed all the particles in my frame some ten times over since I came here; still you will allow me to assume the fact of my identity with J. H., a lame individual who left Cambridge some time since. I suppose you may feel some curiosity about the operations here and their effects, and taking it for granted that you have read somewhat on the subject, I can confirm some of the statements frequently made by those who have written thereupon — for instance, as to the evenness of spirits, the cheerfulness resulting from the treatment and diet, and in some instances the great curative power exercised. I say "some instances," for one would not wish to be involved in any medical discussion or dubious statements. [Some cases quoted, and a discussion of the house.]

I need not tell you that our drink is Adam's Entire. The old and highly respectable firm

Adam & Co., after suffering immensely from the various adulterations and impositions of the unprincipled upon a deluded public, seem, to judge by the circle immediately about me, to be in a fair way to regain their former high reputation. By the way, if hermits were in like demand as in the Middle Ages, the Doctor might establish a branch institution for the Education and Preparation of Young Hermits, with much success, in my opinion: the great difficulty nowadays would be with the beards to obtain the necessary growth. . . . I think my lameness much improved, but I seem a protracted infant always learning to walk. Don't you think you shall be tempted to look in upon us? . . . With all my (water) privileges here I look back fondly upon our ancient and well-beloved Cambridge, and think much of the pleasure of meeting my friends there. Brattleboro' is a very pretty place; one of those that nature does not permit to be otherwise.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *December* 30, 1847.

My dear James:—

I send you $5 for Newfoundland — is it meagre? Then I will round out its proportions with many good wishes and hopes for the poor hungry people, and am

Yours truly.

To J. R. Lowell

Pittsfield, *September* 26, 1849.

My dear James Lowell: —

I left Cambridge on Wednesday, September 5, at 7¼ for the Brighton station, *vulgo* depot. I arrived at that place without adventure or incident worth noticing, entrenched myself firmly behind my trunk and very corpulent carpet bag, and thus lay in ambush for the Worcester train. My view of the landscape through the embrasure in my little redoubt was limited, but satisfactory as far as it went, and I listened to the slow and sparse interlocutions about me with — what shall I say? — a gloomy satisfaction. For you are to understand there was a spongy sky overhead, and everything even to the aspect and tones of the ticket-seller, portended rain; and in the narrow and precipitous defile where our forces were collected, a sudden rush of the pluvial might have hurried us all into destruction. Gloomy were we all, then, and with good reason, and a tear stood in the eye of the clerk as he gave me my ticket; for he was bound to die at his post, holding on to the W. R. R.[1] treasure trunk, and awaiting the 8 o'clock up. A silence came over us all.

Here was I, then, twenty minutes since comfortably at home, now in the centre of a pallid group, all fastened and fascinated in this dreadful spot.

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[1] Boston & Worcester Railroad.

I made an effort to break the horrid silence and dispel the panic which pervaded all, from a cause which none dared to mention. "How," said I, looking at Winship's verdant bank opposite, "how are gooseberries this season?" "Our talk here and now is not of gooseberries," replied the clerk, in a solemn tone. I was rebuffed. The clerk sat down, took a way-bill and perused it with an earnest and absorbed gaze, heaving heavy sighs. It seemed to operate as a sedative. The train came rolling along; a general cry arose, "We are saved." We mounted the cars, leaving the clerk in a swoon. I have never heard of him since. . . .

Thus far, you see, I have written in the amplifying style. If I had only said that I went to Winship's and got into the cars, it would have been a bald and at the same time a succinct truism, and by the other method I have written nearly two pages, and barely commenced my western tour. And you know I am obliged to be economical so as to reserve a little for oral narrative. The truth is, it is all a blank from Winship's to Springfield, and from there to Pittsfield a chasm. So I come to my stay at Pittsfield. I will describe the place to you when I come home. I have here been robustious, laborious, an early riser, and a prodigious admirer of nature. I have chopped wood and tried to catch pickerel, and killed a frog (for bait, mark me, and at a blow — he never knew what hurt him, as the popular phrase is).

Having proceeded thus far in my promised letter, I turn from myself to you and the small band of friends in Cambridge, whom I look back upon with the reverted eye of memory — (what do you think of this expression — rather handsome, eh?). I really want to see you again, and as so much time has elapsed since the disastrous result of the voting appeared, I hope to see you cheerful — or at least composed, including the Doctor, who has invested more extensively in local politics than any of us. From my elevated position — 2 or 3000 feet above the sea (ask Carter) — I look down upon my friends of the plains and bless them like a patriarch.

I write because I said I should; accept that as a reason for this communication.

And believe me,

Yours affectionately and humbly to command.

The first of the Letters that follow is an excellent specimen of Holmes's unconscious art of putting into a letter pretty much all that a letter should contain. He gives news of himself and of local events and persons; he touches a little on wider concerns; and he lets his own personality play freely over it all. Lowell, having lost his wife and having been appointed by Harvard College to the chair of Belles Lettres, from which Longfellow had just resigned, was spending a year of study in Europe to fit himself for his prospective duties as professor.

To J. R. Lowell

Boston, No. 11 Court St.
September 11, 1855, to *September* 25.

My dear J. L.:—

I sit down now in a very subdued frame of mind to write you, — loaded with a heavy sense of my failure to fulfil the promise I gave, to tell you promptly what had been going on after you left. There is one streak of light in my moral prospect, namely that nothing perhaps took place to tell you of, in which case I am all right. The marriage of M. W. is totally excluded from my jurisdiction as a bachelor, and besides that, let me ask myself and you, what is there to record? The truth is, if folks will go a-belle-lettering to Europe, or a-getting married to N. York, and so disjointing and disorganising the society to which they rightly belong, they ought to let silence brood over the desertion, and not ask the derelicts to jot down their sufferings for amusement.

I wrote so far, I think, on Tuesday September 11, and it is now the 14th. — I have jogged along this Summer in a very monotonous manner, and have seen less of my usual associates in Cambridge than for a long time before. . . . Henry Ware has been less in my way than usual, and the fact was explained a few weeks since by his telling me that he was engaged to Miss Hastings (daughter of Oliver). . . . This is quite an event and it seems as if Old

Cambridge had brooded in silence for a month or two to produce it.

When I turn from private affairs to public, there is a comparative fertility. Poor little Harvard Branch[1] was sold up about two months since — Wm. L. Whitney bought it, $10,500, and he has resold it in the most thorough manner — land (most of it), rails, turntable-stones (foundation-underpinning), and hath made a good bargain of it. I should not omit the station house, which was sold in lengths like tape — and of which the front part was bought by College for the use of the new Professor Huntington.

Then, one fine Saturday afternoon about two months since, the Waterworks were symbolized into existence by Mayor Raymond with a spade, and the next thing was a handbill from Nat. Wyeth circulating through the town and on every post and corner, reading like this, — "The fisheries at Fresh Pond are worth $100,000 — they will be ruined — who is to pay for them? There is not water enough for their purposes, &c. &c. — The charter of the W. W. C. is invalid, &c." I give you the style and spirit rather than the words. A lawyer has prayed for an injunction and on Monday we shall see if it will be granted — probably not, the public thinks.

Then, one fine day a man up and said, "They have begun the Horse R.R." — and so they had; but no symptom had appeared in our part of the town to indicate such events; up to the very moment of announcement there was only a vague conjectural opinion — rather a presentiment, in Old Cambridge, that in the course of some few coming decades there would be constructed a Horse R.R. They are now pegging away at it in a style which contrasts amusingly with the mildly anxious uncertainty or, perhaps, the philosophical calm which previously prevailed in Cambridge minds respecting the project. The first sign that the public generally discovered of such a proceeding, was a body [of] men in the middle of West Boston Bridge hacking and ripping with pickaxes, as if to cut off the communication between Boston and Cambridge, and stop some too importunate invader. Soon after we beheld heaps of gravel — small paving-stones from the seaside — and timbers — and soon after, form and comeliness emerging from the confused mob of operators, in the shape of a track, complete all but the rail — and they have done a piece which I shall leave to your fancy to exaggerate or diminish.[1]

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[1] Of the Fitchburg Railroad.

It is now September 21, and I resume. I went with my sister to Salem day before yesterday, Wednesday, to go with Mr. Upham[2] to Plum Island on Thursday, which I did accordingly and among other objects of natural beauty that I saw there was a glass of strong water — We walked from Newburyport (to which by cars) to Plum Island, and back again after our dinner, making a decent tramp for (hem! excuse a slight cough) middle-aged men. But I am afraid you don't care for Plum Island, and plain Republicans that take a frugal walk to and fro, breathing as you do the atmosphere of thrones and dynasties. I fear you will come back and be a churchwarden and wear a gold-headed cane and talk about incendiaries (social). "When I was in Dresden, Sir, in the year '55, Sir, nothing gave me more pleasure, Sir, than to see how the lower orders, Sir, were restrained and coerced, Sir, into decent manners." A tap with the gold-headed cane on some young American's head who has a lesson of reverence to learn, may accompany this reminiscence.

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[1] This, the first horse-railroad for passengers in New England, was opened March 26, 1856.

[2] Charles Wentworth Upham, Mr. Holmes's brother-in-law.

(September 25.) I have written a word or two before inserting this new date, which I do by way of penance. I have just heard last night at the Doctor's of your disappointment at not finding letters, and feel a dismal regret at the potentiality, now past, which I have enjoyed of writing to you in season. The intention to write was so sound, so full, so plethoric even, that I have at least furnished a noble piece of hell-pavement — but I shan't suspect you of taking any interest in such improvements. The monotone of my previous life has been changed to a semitone by your departure, M. White's marriage and H. Ware's engagement, and as fast as I accommodate myself, as well as I can, to each change, some new one comes along.—I suppose that when you get settled for the winter, letters will not be so valuable as on first arrival at Dresden, and mark my words, I mean to send you a letter, yea more than one, when I know it will be at a discount — when you will utter, "*Hein! Hein!*" or some other outlandish expression of disapproval or indifference — and thus pay social damages for not writing before. . . .

One thing would please you much if you were here— it is the immoveable tranquillity with which Old Cambridge takes all the innovations — you know how it bore the gas (a great shock) without winking. It has allowed waterworks and Horse R.R. to be begun with even greater stoicism — nobody knew anything about time, place or circumstance, and nobody knows now more than is thrust before their eyes — I have no doubt I might safely talk in our coteries of the $2,000,000 stock and $100 shares selling at $150 each, and fail to create contradiction or excitement. We have had no Club yet nor talked of it — and I have hardly seen Carter these three or four weeks. There has been a Fusion Convention at Worcester and Rockwell nominated, and it remains to be seen whether Know O's[1] and Whigs will adhere — The Doctor will tell you probabilities in his letter. . . .

Underwood and Southard produced part of their opera, which you may have heard of, founded on [*The*] *Scarlet Letter*, at a late musical Convention with much applause. John Dwight highly approves. . . . C. S.[1] is thriving and sends his love to you; for know all men by these presents, that I am writing at No. 11 Court St. — Ninety-nine Freshmen this year, and 115 Sophs. They ought to catch another Fresh. somewhere to make the round hundred. I hope you are having a pleasant time and doing your duty by storing incidents for the Club. We all miss you and want you back. If they make me Law Professor we shall both be in the faculty together.

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[1] Know Nothings.

Yours affectionately.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *November* 10, 1855.

MY DEAR BOY: —

I received yours of October 15 two days since and read it with a great deal of pleasure, notwithstanding the attack on my legal skill. This I dispose of by three alternative statements. 1st. It is the jest of an honorary brother of the profession[2] — a privileged communication. 2d. It is a disguised form of envy — that I readily overlook and compassionate. 3d. It is a distortion of mind that you have got among the German jurists, who I know are my habitual detractors. So you see I am perfectly easy — and don't you feel any remorse. As to girls in an astronomical point of view, I am mostly conversant with fixed stars; and by the way I was a little shocked that you should allude to such things as comets — that go flying about in open sight with bare tails.

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[1] C. W. Storey, whose office was at 11 Court Street.

[2] Lowell himself had qualified as a lawyer, but he never practised.

No meeting of the Club! Yes, no meeting of the Club. Sir! did n't I write in September? and if I did n't, have we always waited the slow convenience of oysters? But let me tell you now that we have had but one meeting to this time, and more than that, — that I do not consider ourselves at present as the regular Club, but as the Club *ad interim* only, and if you have credit enough among the Teutschers to borrow a Latin Dictionary, you will know what I mean by *ad interim.* As to Club divergencies about corks, you do faintly recall something of the kind. I only retained a general but profound impression that all corks were insecure when you were about.

Now, as you say, a truce to nonsense, and let us begin on the regular matter, as newspapers call it. I seem up to this point to have been answering my own first letter.

I am highly pleased with your excerpts from life about you, — your enthusiastic bugger — your very innocent or heinously indifferent servants, and all the other particulars — excellently observed and told — go on in the path of duty. Why can't you keep a little journal of the odd and picturesque, ever so brief? The energy of a little punctuality is the only tug in such things, as the Herr Professor knows. Do let me beg you to keep an eye on historic-remarkable-locals (to compound Teutsch-like). Please examine the great battlefields when you come across them, as convenience allows, and make note! You ought to bring home a relic, if you can get them undoubted, from every such spot you visit. Especially please recollect that as things grow commonplace to you by familiarity and proximity, they don't to us away, and so be on your guard against the depreciation. I would bet on you to go over the most hackneyed route in Europe, and without effort to give an interesting account. I mean confining yourself quite strictly to mere observation. It is not the roads but the men who are at fault in the frequent peregrinations. Even where a man has little ability, he can throw his own grotesque shadow as he goes along and amuse you. As a private luxury I should like to send Sibley and P. Dabney[1] both on a long tour; they would not only entertain me with very curious narratives, but would have a splendid controversy when they got home, for which I should gladly furnish paper and ink, relying on them for the needful truculence and venom. What bitter allegations and contradictions would fly forth and back to weave the web of controversy!

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[1] John L. Sibley, Harvard A.B. 1825, Librarian of Harvard College, 1856–77; and J. Peele Dabney, Harvard A.B. 1811 — both worshipers of minute details.

"Sibley says, p. 643, paragraph 9241: 'The celebrated Spire of Strasburgh, completed 11¼ A.M. March 10, 1197, is 490⅖ feet in altitude.' [Dabney replies:] "Had Mr. S. elevated his unwieldy bulk to the height which accurate observation demanded, and registered in his *caput mortuum* results which his egregious parsimony perhaps would have hindered his spending the requisite six groschen to obtain, he would not have had his usual success in diffusing error; he would have told the world one solitary truth, and spoiled the harmony of his wretched compilation — this truth, viz., that Strasburgh Spire is 492 feet NO inches high!"

Again *ex parte* Sibley. "Mr. Dabney says, p. 214, 'That the inhabitants of the District of Streibhauser make frequent use at supper of a kind of pease porridge which they call Hoegen Schwasch.' Now I spent two months in this region endeavouring to verify the date of the erection of the town hall of Voettelsuntrink, which is the capital of the District, and I can confidently say that I never saw pease used in any shape more than half a dozen times, and *never* at supper or in the evening! So much for Mr. D's accuracy!"

Now to tell you about our town. Your friends are well I believe all round, except Henry Ware, who has a severe typhoid. He was reported better yesterday for the first time.

The internal improvements seem to be running a mad race through the village, — ploughing up roads and intercepting our daily pilgrims. It takes about an hour to go to Boston now, starting on Main Street. The little bridge is being rebuilt and intercepts Main and Harvard Streets; the travel for a part of the way is all thrown on Broadway, which is wofully cut and slashed. The Horse Rail Road[1] has got up to the apex made by Main and Harvard. The waterpipes have crept along Brattle Street, I don't know how far. I will now give you a photograph of the Common as it appears this bright Saturday afternoon. I have been to the window and taken the impression. The result is five teams in different directions, and your neighbor Will is dismounting from his chaise at the Harvard R.R. Station[2] — that was. You know H.B.R.R.[3] has been sold up. Well, College bought the station house, curvature of the spine and all. They have cut off two thirds or more of the rear for a carpenter's shop (the old College carpenter's shop), and left the front for the new Professor Huntington[3] for moral gymnastics. I don't know exactly what. Well, Will is in the photograph dismounted there — he came out in a minute or two and went his way — restless spirit of a jeweller turned gentleman. Well, for the photograph. I don't give you the general view because you know it too well—but the remains of the old schoolhouse shed a homely horror yet, on the opposite side.

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[1] The horse-car line, between Bowdoin Square, Boston, and Harvard Square, was laid in 1855–56.

[2] The Harvard Branch of the Fitchburg Railroad, of which the Cambridge station was near the Holmes House, had recently been sold, and its traffic discontinued.

[3] Harvard Branch Railroad.

[4] Professor Frederic Dan Huntington, Harvard Divinity School, 1842; Plummer Professor of Christian Morals, 1855–60; P. E. Bishop of Central New York, 1869–1904.

The old Farwell store with 5000 ft. of land was sold about a month since for — how much, think you? verily $14,000 — by the Reads, some of them (to be occupied by John), and with their excellent conservatism to be only raised and enlarged — not replaced. I see Carter now very little; Underwood[1] a little — and call pretty often on the Doctor. Society is a watchman's beat with me. I go forward and backward, sometimes as you know, crying Twelve — aye Two o' the clock and all is well — but that seldom now. By the way, with reference to your comparative juvenility, I hope you like the ink I use. I find it very pleasant to write with and shall hardly expect any complaint from you, but if its black stare is offensive, I will water it another time.

You don't know perhaps that the K. N.'s[2] have triumphed again by about 14,000 plurality. The Whigs have dwindled to the smallest dimensions — about 14,000 votes in the whole state.

I am much pleased with the cab-horse enthusiasm of the bug artist — a right good expression.

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[1] Francis H. Underwood, one of the founders of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

[2] Know Nothings, a transient political party.

I rather think you are having a good time in Dresden — do you drink beer by the yard and eat sausages by the mile? How did they feel about Sebastopol?[1] You can answer my question to any other correspondent who will tell me. What are their affinities, I wonder. The Saxons I should think would like to see Russia cudgeled. Oh, about the inscription at Coblentz — that prefecture might be the [*illegible*] of an Italian as well as a Russian. At any rate, whatever the French may be, I looked only to the sentiment, leaving it to minuter critics who should come after me to censure the language.

I have been lame now about a month, but have hobbled out in the evening with a crutch — deem myself a good deal better now. I am very much pleased with your letter and commend you for sending it, — (coals of juniper) I am going to read it to night at the Doctor's, *omissis omittendis*.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *December* 6, 1855.

The same ink I see with which I wrote you before, but I will have another bottle e'er this page is finished or perish in the struggle to obtain it. This is fit only to record decayed friendships and obsolete enmities — or virtuous resolutions not to be enforced — or certificates of stock in the H.B.R.R.

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[1] Sebastopol surrendered to the French and English on September 8, 1855, after a siege of over 11 months.

I am very much pleased to discern in your letter to me ("the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged") the marks of cheerfulness. It is your bounden duty to be [as] cheerful as you can — you must n't sit tapping on your chest, as a raven might do upon a snuff-box that he could not open, but you must fly round in obedience to the law of your natural temperament, although the reading should be temporarily obscured. Germany seemed to me a cosy and companionable land, and you have already lit upon some that confirm my prepossessions — your nice Dr. Reichenbach, to whom I would fain send my regards is one of them — your bug enthusiast would make an infusion of amusing character that would flavor a dozen ordinary men. I should like to make a concrete bug out of the parts of divers species, and send it to him, if I had the artistic skill.

All things have gone on in a moderate way since I wrote you last except Railroad and Waterworks; they have been in a state of high inflammation since their commencement; it has come to a head now I understand down in our Square, and a violent eruption there promises a speedy improvement of the complaint. I have been lying by since I wrote you — my leg is much better now — but I speak by hearsay about the middle of the village as yet — not having been there for a good while; but I have tramped about with my crutch in other directions.

We had Club last Thursday night, 6th (a week ago), at Carter's and tonight, Friday, 14th, have it at the Doctor's, vice Underwood's who was to have had it. We enjoyed your verses, which the Doctor read to us, exceedingly, and had a right merry time over them. Carter has the goat yet, but we found that Jimmy had made a bonfire of the hay which had been laid in for its winter feed. Jimmy sat at a corner of the table at the beginning of our play and was examined by the Club respecting his misdeeds. We found the various packs of cards that were presented, mixed up and disfigured, and after some exertion selected one sound pack. We played till near 12 and who do you suppose beat every time and one staggering mephitis? It is in season that I recollect the 176 bye-law of our Club, which says that "no *special* information respecting the doings of the Club shall be transmitted to correspondents out of the country even though the same should be members thereof."

In compliance with that ordinance, I forbear. But for this ordinance I should mention that we had Bourbon Whiskey, crackers and cheese.

The village of course seems very quiet to me. I make my calls in the evening — go to the Doctor's, etc., and have stretched up to Carter's two or three times. I don't very often see little Mabel.[1] When I do, she appears very bright and well. Charley Storey comes out to see me generally twice a week and makes himself very agreeable; he insists on looking at the black front of my stove instead of taking the guest's seat and looking in at the door where fire may be seen as well as felt. He has been quite busy lately and is in very good spirits.

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[1] Mr. Lowell's daughter.

Mrs. Horsford died a short time since, at Shelter Island where they had gone to spend Thanksgiving. Dr. Harris has been very ill with pleurisy, is better. Judge Jackson died yesterday morning — he has been very infirm for the last year.

Henry Ware is but just getting about now — walked as far as our house for the first time on Monday, and then would n't come upstairs but rested in the entry a few minutes, — he begins to gain faster now.

I look out on the Common — there is about an inch of snow, but the roads are black. I can with great ease imagine you swinging across it with your chamois stick and your great blue cloakcoat. I bear a grudge to that chamois ever since we hooked so many passengers with it as we travelled Boston streets one night. You needed a ball on your horn as much as an ox. I hope you'll take my advice yet, and get it truncated or balled.

If you go to Paris do look at the Revolutionary places for me — at the Abbaye, etc., such as remain.

Monday morning, December 17.

I must as usual make an allusion to the weather. It is a beautiful April morning, mud plenty in the streets. We have been having several days of rain. Whenever you write me again do tell me about your weather — give us the values in Fahrenheit if you can. How many valuable impressions have I lost by the references to Réaumur's scale, whose relations to his rival F. I have never remembered two days together; but if enlightened by foreign residence you should be tempted to smile at my ignorance, let me ask, do you remember the values of a kopeck, a rouble, a rupee, a piaster, of an hectolitre, a lispund, a kilogramme? all these are familiar to me as — but let me not boast myself.

We had Club on Friday night at the Doctor's, it not being quite convenient for Underwood, who has it next week. Lois as you call her, Mrs. H. as I do, went to a concert at Mr. Hodges's with Miss Dunlap. There was a romp of children going on in the parlor. After we had played a little while, Mabel came in with Sam, both in high spirits, and bade us good-night. Mabel looks nicely. Well at it we went at about 8, and I think we did not leave off till somewhere near 12½. Ordinance 176 again prevents my telling you who beat. Perhaps I may say that if immediate execution had awaited the party which lost the rubber, Little and B.[1] would *not* at this day be without their literary assistant — the goat would *not* be without a master. Carter and Underwood occasionally fall into a controversy about their respective firms, in which each plumes his feathers and crows a little. Carter assumes the air of a long-established dealer whose eminence in trade is too well known to need much argument; Underwood responds as a pioneer in enterprise, tells of splendid sales, and smiles gently at the decent moderation of the old concern. The Doctor and I applaud every dexterous thrust and fierce dig.

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[1] Little & Brown, the firm of Boston publishers, with which John Bartlett was connected.

Carter's cigars are rather severely borne upon since your lines, but he smokes them with great equanimity.

We had a very pleasant time.

Please tell me the next time you write me what weather attends your north, south, east and west winds generally. I should like to compare them with ours. I am willing to appoint you my philosopher at the Court of Saxony.

Waldo Higginson[1] and his wife have come out to stay the winter at Mr. Whittemore's.

I went over to Mrs. Howe's last night. Doctor and wife and girls there; a pleasant quiet time.

I hope you are very well and happy now at Dresden. Our winter and fall have been very mild to this time — if yours have been as warm, you have been well off. Brown got back here a few weeks since in good condition — called to see me a few minutes.

I believe I have exhausted my stock of informa-

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[1] Waldo Higginson, Harvard 1833, died 1894.

tion and suggestion for the time and so will conclude, adding a postscript if occasion offers.

Yours affectionately.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *Janvier* 27, 1856.

Mon cher Jacques: —

Je vous repondrai en Français (c'est à dire pour une part de ma lettre) parce que je crois que vous recevrez beaucoup d'amusement en voyant ma pauvreté en regard de cette langue, et en riant sur mes mésappropriations et fabrications des mots.

Néanmoins je sens une certaine embarrassement quand je cherche dans ma mémoire pour les trésors de Wandstrocht et de Nugent. Depuis j'ai travaillé avec ces sages, la neige a tombé sur ma tête et refroidi mon ardeur pour les langues. Je reste mon crédit principalement sur lequel j'ai oublié. Apparemment, la langue Française est promotive de la perspiration. Je sens une chaleur oppressive, sans la moindre particle de l'ardeur. Mais courage, il faut que nous supportions notre réputation comme linguiste. J'ai toujours eu une grande admiration pour la "lingua Franca." C'est une approximation à une langue universelle — une espèce de compromise par laquelle tous donnent et tous reçoivent un peu. J'aimerais mieux d'en faire usage que de la pure Française.

Pour les nouvelles de Cambridge, nous avons eu depuis un mois un hiver des plus forts. Les train-

eaux "have run all that time" comme disent les Américains. Le Docteur Harris[1] est mort et Sibley pleurt officiellement, non autrement, je crois. La nouvelle compagnie a acheté tous les omnibus de Stearns et Willard.[2]

I can't stand it any longer; the French does not disguise my poverty of news nor the news my poverty of French.

The truth is, that everything here is quiescent as usual — the people are trying to keep themselves warm and not much else, except to freeze themselves occasionally on sleighrides.

As usual I had thought this time to have begun an answer to your letter immediately. I received it December 22.

I was very sorry to find you repeat your assertion about the internal pain, and I hope most sincerely that since that time you have improved and are well.

I have heard at the Doctor's that you really became ill upon it, and I hope that, from that time, you have taken a new start in health. When you wrote I presume you to have been better.

I trust you will get nicely over your difficulty and write me heartily to that effect.

I will now allude to the other parts of your letter which present a violent contrast to the idea of illness. In the first place let me say that the "cab-horse enthusiasm" to which I alluded, and which you say you don't understand, was an expression of yours in a former letter when you were describing the entomological enthusiast, and it hit my fancy as very good.

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[1] Thaddeus William Harris, Harvard College Librarian, 1831–56. Sibley succeeded him.

[2] Owners of the line of omnibuses which ran to Boston.

I am much pleased with the collectanea of actual life that you send me; they are very good. I am glad to have them down on paper, but the idea of your not being in the good spirits of high health damps the fun of them.

I ought to tell you, perhaps, that I have got well again, so as to walk about.

I don't make a point of going to Boston very regularly now, my business not being so urgent (as it was, shall I say?) as to oblige me to go often. I live a very quiet life as you may suppose, and have my melancholy days as well as the rest of the world, but make out tolerably, taking it altogether.

To Charles Eliot Norton

February 21, [1860].

My dear Mr. Norton,—

I thank you for your invitation for Wednesday evening. I am sorry that I cannot enjoy the occasion in your company, but I will drink Lowell's[1] health and your own, in the best potation I may have, at 9 o'clock by the town bell. And if the ringer by any mysterious impulse shall ring a louder and a longer peal than is his wont, I will then drink to him, as a worthy workman in his craft, that he may have only so much rheumatism as may make his daily and nightly labors at the bell a matter of sympathy and admiration, and may give a moral coloring to his 11 and 4 o'clock draughts.

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[1] J. R. Lowell's birthday was February 22.

You will congratulate me I know when I tell you that I have an immense literary enterprise on hand.

I prefer, however, to keep this a profound secret between yourself and me until I shall sometime tell you what the enterprise is.

Yours truly
John Holmes.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *January* 18, 1866.

Mein lieber Jacobus:—

If anything of which I draw satisfaction there is, it shall be that having gelandet to this country so late than by the year 1812, I have so learned the tongue's idiom and have out through penetrated its speaking way (*weg sprake*) of it. I will not therefore to write you in other as our adopted speech.

I have with Herr Bartlett twice computing to outcome to see thee bin gehinderd. My ankel, of which I hope I was far on carried, has itself very much in through worse bettered (*bei ans bloser-*

besser gedruckt), so that to walk is a not-to-be-thought-of thing.

Here my dear James, I drop the pseudo-Teutonic, and place my foot on my native heather, to-wit, Webster's and Worcester's Dictionaries.

I have not heard directly from you but from indirections which have come to me, have supposed you better of your cold. I hope you are clear of it, I am sure. If you are well enough to have Club, I must tell you that I cannot come. Tuesday evening I went over to J. B.'s with crutch and cane mighty briskly, feeling as if I could almost do without them — came home all right and when I went to bed had to take my crutch to get there, from excessive lameness. So I am all taken aback again and feel obliged to resume the careful process.

We beat you at the Doctor's 3 to 2 I think (we won the rubber anyhow), J. B. playing for you. Twice, as our German friend on the other page has told you, I have been coming up to see you. On Tuesday night J. B. was hindered by a dinner invitation and could n't be out in season.

Present my regards to Mrs. Lowell. (That is good "old school," is n't it?)

Wishing the Club all sorts of prosperity and a little less colds and lame shins.

Assure me of thy prosperous oncoming by note or person.

To John Bartlett

!! J. B. This a horridly trivial letter for a man of my years. Read it to yourself and Burn it.

Cambridge, *Monday forenoon, August* 9, '68.

My dear J. B.: —

I think I see you "laying off" in the country of "protuberances" (See Geogr. Def^{n} "Mountain"), your fishing-rod leaning against one mountain, your hat hung on the summit of another, and yourself and Mrs. B. and Miss B. sitting in the valley between, discussing the prospects of the First Parish in Cambridge, while I here at home no less public-spirited look out of my window at short intervals to see that the repairs go on properly.

Solitude reigns here. The average number of people that pass for twelve hours from 6 to 6, per hour is $\frac{1}{12}$. At 10.05 P.M. the travel (of pedestrians) is 0, and from that time till 6 the next morning, you can hear a small dog bark, over the river. I should like to hear a hand-organ, or some fire-crackers, or some saw-filing or something. The only amusement we have is the burglaries. You would be surprised to see how cheerful everybody looks when there has been a "breaking and entering" (local expression). But they are very rare.

Of course we can't count the funerals that pass through town as gaieties; but I fear that some people — I hesitate to express my thought — yes I will say it — that some people begin to enjoy them. The city government foresaw the dullness and melancholy of midsummer and by a happy thought, they instituted repairs on the old burial ground to keep people's spirits up. There are no mosquitoes nor bugs and I confess I miss them — they made things lively, at any rate. I hope you continue to have a most complete good time. All the fish hereabouts are delighted at your excursion and are making holiday. Week before last I went with J. L. to Concord, and stayed with the Judge[1] from Wednesday to Friday evening, — had a good time and came home to resume the old routine.

Henry Ware has come home. I shall call on him directly, and expect at the same time to enquire after Nim, whose guardian I had expected to be at this time.

The Doctor is at home, and Tracy, who has been away, and James Howe, who has ditto. The brothers are going on the 20th to Worthington. I think it is where they lived when little children. I will now leave a space to fill up, if the general depression and vacuity here will furnish me with means.

Diary of a citizen of Cambridge

Aug. 1. Repairs of meetinghouse and burying
ground going on — a dorbug flew in at a
" window — caused alarm of burglars — great
excitement in the town.

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[1] Judge E. R. Hoar.

Aug. 2. Repairs still going on; a man who had n't left enough in his bottle fell off his cart but escaped without broken legs—a great deal of excitement in the town.
3. Repairs still going on.
4. Repairs continued.
5. Repairs on the meetinghouse going on.
6. Repairs of meetinghouse and burial ground very considerably advanced.
7. Workmen still busy on the meetinghouse.
8. The repairs of the church are continued.
9. The meetinghouse still under repair.

I shall surprise you perhaps by telling you that I too am going to make an excursion; and where do you suppose? I am going across the water. What do you say to that? I am going to leave my native home — its solitudes, sweet though sad — its associations—its group of familiar friends—and cross the dreary waste of waters to Boston.

Please tell Miss B. that I thank her for her letter, and that the small contribution did not deserve such a liberal notice. Tell her that I am delighted to hear of the general enjoyment of the party, and that I know I should enjoy a great deal to be with them.

I thank you and Mrs. B. for your kind message.

I shall expect you all to come back surcharged with narrative, for which I pledge myself to supply an audience.

The men are just going by with their scythes to cut the grass in Harvard Square — thought by good judges to be at the rate of 2½ tons to the acre.

There is a man under my window says he wants to find the way to Porter's — has been wandering about for an hour and has n't seen a person. Do you call that solitude or not. I fear that I am verging toward fiction. That won't do. But facts are very scarce indeed.

With kind regards to you all.

I am yours aff.
J. H.

CHAPTER II

SETTLING DOWN

CAMBRIDGE in the fifties of the nineteenth century was a pleasant place to live in; sufficiently near to Boston to put its inhabitants within reach of theatres and concerts, and of the bustle which commerce brings to a large seaport, and of the official dignity of a capital city. But the town itself felt no inferiority; indeed, its leading people seem sometimes to have looked down a little on the rest of the world, — including Boston. The old notables, who dated from the early days of the Republic, had nearly all passed away, but the recollections they had left were still fresh in the minds of their descendants, and the Spirit of the founders was a vitalizing reality.

Great men dwelt then in Cambridge. The Craigie House was the home of Longfellow, a poet whose works had already become household words in America and whose fame was surely spreading through the world. No foreigner came to these shores without seeing him. Lowell, too, was rapidly rising as a figure in our national literature. Both he and Longfellow served in turn as professors in the University, and gave an unacademic quality to their teaching. Agassiz, the inspired Swiss, was making discoveries in natural history as entrancing as fairy tales.

Less commanding than these three, but still great personages in Cambridge were the older members of the Harvard faculty—James Walker, the President; Francis Bowen, the vehement philosopher and economist; Cornelius C. Felton, the Grecian; Edward T. Channing, the Professor of Rhetoric; Joseph Lovering, the physicist; Asa Gray, the master botanist; Benjamin Peirce, the foremost of American mathematicians; and Jeffries Wyman, the anatomist. Jared Sparks, ex-President, had recently given up his professorship of History, and his predecessor, the versatile Edward Everett, continued as an Overseer of the College.

The younger group numbered several members destined soon to take the lead in their respective fields: Francis J. Child in English, George M. Lane in Latin, Josiah P. Cooke in Chemistry, William W. Goodwin in Greek, and Charles W. Eliot.

Life in Cambridge was perforce simple, because it was automatically regulated by the salaries of the professors, which were small. You dined at three in the afternoon, and you had a frugal supper at seven. Few of the academic folk could afford to keep a carriage; but hospitality—which can thrive on a very slender purse, because it springs from the heart and not from the purse — did not lack.

Unattached to the University, were Boston lawyers or merchants, who found a congenial residence in Cambridge. Nor should we forget the retired professors, or their widows and families, who shed upon the new generation the fading glories of their earlier, happier prime. A social philosopher might have wondered at the tendency of those families to split up into clusters of two or three unmarried sisters each, whom their friends called, without disrespect, "girls," no matter how advanced their age. They helped to lend to the place intellectual and social quaintnesses that reminded you of "Cranford."

John Holmes slipped in and out of these various strata, having companions in each and observing all much more closely than they perhaps suspected. He followed the lives of his friends so sympathetically that what happened to them were events in his own life. Above all, he cared for the welfare of his mother, the little old lady of fourscore and upward whose animation seemed undiminished.

The interest which formed the mainstay of his social diversions, and to which he most frequently alludes, was the Whist Club. This consisted of himself and Lowell, Dr. Estes Howe and Robert Carter. Dr. Howe had been a classmate of his at Harvard, had studied medicine, and had migrated to Cincinnati, where he practiced a short time, and then abandoned his profession for a business career. Returning to Cambridge, he married for his second wife a sister of Mrs. Lowell. Carter was born at Albany the same year as Lowell. His parents were

THE WHIST CLUB

John Holmes, Estes Howe, Robert Carter, and James Russell Lowell

Roman Catholics, but, after attending a Catholic school for a year, at fifteen, he became a Swedenborgian. On coming to Cambridge he assisted Lowell in editing the *Pioneer*, a short-lived literary magazine of which Lowell was the editor. When this failed, he secured a position as clerk in the Cambridge post office. Next, he was secretary to Prescott, the historian; then, editor of the *Commonwealth,* a Boston weekly newspaper; and so, with journalism, politics, and high-grade hack-writing for the publishers, he led a varied existence. In 1854 he called a meeting at Worcester which resulted in the formation of the Republican Party in Massachusetts. He was a comrade whom Lowell and Holmes found most friendly and entertaining.

The members of the Club met, in turn, at each other's houses, played their game, and then regaled themselves with supper. Only the most urgent call kept them from their appointment at the Club, and then one of two or three substitutes filled the vacant place. Henry Ware, the youngest of these, was the son of William Ware, whose novel, "Zenobia," won great popularity in the United States and England and is still reprinted. John Bartlett, another of the group, was connected with the prosperous publishing house of Little & Brown in Boston. He resided in Cambridge and devoted his leisure moments to compiling a volume of "Familiar Quotations," the first edition of which appeared in 1855.

All these men had much in common — an appreciation of humor, a love of books and mellowness, and individual hobbies which made them interesting to themselves and to their fellows. From Holmes's letters we might infer that they were epicures, but their epicurism was innocent, and their relish for a dish or for a bottle of "the rosy" seems to have been an echo of the talk of bygone clubmen in books. The importance of their little circle, especially for Holmes, lay in the fact that it afforded the best conditions for strengthening friendship.

THE GOLIATH TITTLE LETTERS

Mr. Holmes was always very fond of children and he went about among the little sons and daughters of his friends like a fairy godfather, distributing shiny dimes and quarters, telling wonderful stories and playing strange, amusing parts. In the series of letters which follow he pretended to be Goliath Tittle, a sailor from Kennebunk. He wrote them to his nephew Edward Holmes, the younger son of the Doctor. The boy was born in 1847.

NORTH PENNY ROYAL WEST PARRISH MASS.
September 14, 1853.

DEAR NED

It seems a long while since I wrote to you for then I remember I wore jacket and trousers all of a piece and now Ive wore regulur pants & boots for ever so long. I wore straps a little but busted em playing of football and afterwards old Grouts dog eat the football, case and all and it made him plagey sick. I staid Commencement time at Cambridge with Joe Dunster and we had a first rate time but I got sick they said it was eating watermellens and oysters before diner, and peaches afterward and custards, but I guess it was some green apples that I eat after breakfast and drank a lot of milk after em but I had to take eppikak and lots of rubub and I tell you what I didnt hardly know who I was for two or three days. They kept me short of eating for ever so long and I eat up a whole lout of bread that I found in the house and it didnt hurt me any. I guess that I shall be a carpenter it is real good fun a planing, while the carpenters was gone home to diner the other day that are working at our house I planed a good deal but they said I spoiled the plane and the folks had to pay for it ever so much and a little saw too that I ground to sharpen it and they said they should take it all out of my allowance which I have fopence a week. I go a fishing here and caught an eel the other day but he bit my hook off so that I could not get him. I should like to go a shooteing theres a great many chip birds about here but the folks wont let me Ive got a real fine bowarrer it shoots like anything and I broke a great decanter with it the other day that was on the edge of the winder just washed ever so far off I did n't think I should hit it but it did and broke it all to smash, and I got a hiding for it and the folks say it must come out of my allowance. Billy Bumpus has been to the Cristall Pallas with his father and he says he got lost and took up by the polis and carried to the watchhouse and there was a man give him some apples and his father come and took him out and give him a quarter of a dollar he says he had a fust rate time and tried to get lost agin but he couldent somehow I go to school now again and we have Banks in the school which we keep in our desks I and Jerry Battles had one for five hundred thousand dollars but the master took all the bills away and give Jerry a hiding because his name was on the bills for Pressident I broke three squares of glass at the Schoolhouse the other day trying to pull little Tom Twiggs in to the winder and the master give me a hiding and told the folks and they had to pay thirty seven cents a square and it, all got to come out of my allowance. I havent had any money for a good while and I offered to tend cows after school for old Mr. Goathorn the town driver and he promised to give me some money sometime, but just as quick as he was out of sight Corners red cow she run after me and chased me and catched me under the jacket with her horns just as I was agetting over the fence and tore it putty bad, but Tom Twiggs and Jerry Battles and I stoned her for it afterwards

I should have wrote to you before but the other day I and Tom and Jerry fought a bumbly bees nest and we all got stung about the eyes so that we could n't see for putty near a week

My mother says she should like to have you come and see us

Yours truly
GOLIATH TITTLE.

ISLAND OF BOOGUS, Long 171 Lat 9½
Sept. 6, 1854.

MY DEAR EDWARD,

I went out from Kennebunk on another voyage and was Ship wracked and cast on Boogus Island where I now am. They are very clever folks on this island only they don't wear much clothes and eat each other a good deal, which they are very good eatting as I no having been obleeged to assist at a good many feests. I was tatood once afore being ketched by the Iousys in the South Attlantic, and they tattood me in round figgers but the Boogus Islanders they tattood square so that I had toe be dun allover agin which throwd me into a high feever being very painfull, which I am now all well and look very curious. Tuesdays and Fridays wee have to fight the Popo men which comes over to steal our folks on those days and we have a pretty smart time using clubs & kobags and titis and stones.

I hope to come home next year if I can only get on board of a vessel.

I send you some toppo shells which they make pappaws of and hope you will like them.

I'm dreadful tired of bread fruit which is not like bread hardly at all.

If you See Hercules or Og give my love to them

Your friend
GOLIATH TITTLE

WISCASSET *Sept.* 15, 1854.

MY DEER EDWARD

It is now a long whil sens I have wrote too you; sens whic time I have grode very tal and bigg but I have not had no scholeing skersly on account of haveng ben to sea pritty nere oll the time sens and find it exseding hard for to spel alsoe having been so much in forren parts where they speaks so defferint. I ran a little whil cabing boy in a slupe from Wiscasset to Bosten and one trip we put in ter Gloshister and I staid ashore and let the vessel go on, and I heern they threaten soe about walupping uf me if they could ketch me thet I kem to Boston on foote and got Aunt Robbens to git me a berth with Capting Crowder of the Ship Deadlights which as I found arterwards hed olways been very onlucky. This Capting fell into a way of knocking me down after breakfast, which tuffened me a good deal, and I grode very fast, and the Capting put his shoulder out down the hatch and I got along with the mate fust rate, and we got amung the ilands in the Persific, and the Cappen he was ashore with the bote one day at the Fegees and they cotch him and made a rost of him and ett him along with two of the crew. Well upon this we up anker and made off, and wee kum to another iland and traded, and I went off with Joseph Grummitt of Squam for to see the island and we got took prizoners and was carried differant ways by them that took us. I should er had a fust rate time, plenty of benarners & breadfruit and everything but they would have me tatooed, and as they had got kind er fond of me they would have it done in fust rate style, and I never see the like afore — they war two hours a day for six weeks making all kinds of figgers of man & beast and bird on my unfortunit hyde with a thing like a fine tooth comb which they drove into me and then rubbed in the ink; you might a hearn me anywheres within a league it hurt so and it throad me into a high fever and I was sore for two months; well bye and bye they set me over to a another tribe and this tribe talked of tattooing me agin in their fashion which was different and I run away and hid by the shore and see a ship and made signals and was took off amost starved — Well I served as mariner aboard this ship for about six months, and while she lay at San Francisco I went up to the mines and dug five hundred dollars worth of gold and then I cum back to the ship and I foun she warnt ready to sail and I bought a wheelbarrer, and used to be porter and made fourty dollars a day for a month, and then I cum home in the ship to New York the name of her was the Harricane. So I cum back to Wiscasset, and they was terrible glad fur to see me, but felt dredful bad about the tattoos which made me look like all git out as they say. Well I put my money in the bank twelve hundred dollars, and about a week after I cum home, a man comes and offers me from Mr. Barnum $500. dollars for six months for an exhibition, for a wild Tongarree man but I wouldnt do it and I have been to Mr. Hayes the Kimmist, and he says he can take the tattoos out of me for one hunderd dollers. If I can get em out I am going to school for to get some larnin and if I cant I guess I shall go to sea agin. If you come to Wiscasset Ill give you some shells and an Injun batt that they knock folkses brains out with — And am

Yours truly
GOLIATH TITTLE

KENNEBUNK PORT *Sept.* 14, 1855.

MY DEAR NED,

I have been a sailing for some time out of Glossishter, Cape Ann in the Sloop Tremendous of 40 tun a carrying of ballist to Boston. We most generilly git folks to discharge it from the vessel so that I have had a putty good chance to go about and see the town likewise for to go into the country. About a fortnite ago I went to the Museum to see the curriosities, but I found that I had seed prittey much all of em in forren parts where Ive been. They had a shark there about fifteen foot long that they seemed to think a good deal of — why Ive Seen em off in the Pessific two and thirty foot long easy — and there was one that eat our cook up when I was aboard of the Albertross at the Fogaroo Islands that was forty foot clear from his catheads to his tafferl — for we kotch him wihin an hour arterwards and measshered him and we found the cook a laying in him just as comfertable as ef it was his bunk, and we should ha hed him on duty agin if the shark hednt accidently a bit him right through the head in swallerin him on account as we supposed of his woollen cap which kind of shoked him. Then they had kinnoos that I didnt think nothing of, for Ive owned twice as putty ones, when I was a prisoner among the Shagmarac islands to the Cannyballs I believe I told you before in a letter that I had been prisoner to the Cannyballs as I have been in various places, and they always treated me well — I have n't got a word to say aginst em — but they was dreadful fond of eating one another as I told you before. If a Shagmaracker catched a Teefoo man or a Teefoo man catched a Shagmaracker it was all day with em right off — theyd fat em up a little if they was lean but if they wasn't why just give em a knock or two with them kobags, and then invite the company to come about three hours after to the chum chum or feast — The museum man was so tickled with my tattooing that he wanted for to hire me for a curiosity, but I wouldnt — I dont make a great deal of money but I ant going to exhibit any how. There was a man up at Boston told me I might make a good living a going round amongst the ministery and others for a reformed canniball but I told Em I wouldnt do no such a thing as to go and cheat for a living. The last trip as I made from Glossishter I brought a kind of venter with me a lot of woollen socks that I bot cheap down here to the Cape, and I set out to sell em in Boston, and I did sell some of em to a pritty good proffit but I see so many poor folks without stockings that I give a good many away so that I didn't make much. I went out to Cambridge one day cos I wanted to enquire after your grandmother and I found her first rate, and she give me a piece of cake and seemed to pity me a good deal because Id been tattooed, and made me a present of a quarter of a dollar. She told me that she had just heerd from her son Wendell to Louisville and he was very well, and she asked me how I used to feel to be so fur away from Kennebunk, and I told her I got putty much used to it but everyonce in a while I wanted to See the folks to home. She asked me if I ever wrote letters home and I told her that I didn't have no chance, and she said that she had a daughter in law and a granddaughter that wrote her beautiful letters out of the country and she desired to be thinkful. I want to See you Edward but I am all the time a sailing to and fro — Hercules my brother says he should like to see you — hes grown tremendous tall and big and expects to go a lumbering next winter. I give him a pair of boots that I bout of a Dutchman when I sailed in the Zwei Brudern which was a Lubec ship that I met with in the Pessifick

The other day I met Lok Strom a Norweggan that I used to know to Valparaso when we put in in the Billowbreaker in distress which was the most onlucky ship I ever see afterward lost on Joggle reef crew saved — He and I think of taking a Chebacco bout and trading along shore — Ive got a little money in the Kennebunk Savings Bank and he is very forehanded I guess hes got as much as two hundred dollars and ever so many clothes — Give my kind regards to all your folks

Yours truly
G. T.

At sea (*about Sept.* 27, 1855).
Off Glosishter
1210 Sea Time

My dear Ned,

I tell you I was pleggy sorry not to hev writ you a letter last week. Me and my pardner that I told you of has been doing a real good bisiness; we got a real good hand to go before the mast. Bill Butters; he was born down to Quoddy the yeer of the great gale, and says hes always been fond of hard weather from his cradle; — started on the Penobscot in his mothers bread trough at eight years old and got wracked and nigh drownded; then agin when he was fourteen he started to go to the West Indys in a dory thinking it was much nigher than what it is and he got putty nigh starved that time and was picked up by the Dromedary and carried to Hong Kong and round the world, and after that went to sea reglar for a living, and he got a lick on his hand of a block his last vyage that give him a weeping sinner, and he wants to heal it up and so he goes with us which gives him a better chance and works fust rate with a pitch plaster on the back of his left hand So Im Captin and my pardner he's mate and Bill Butters he's the crew, and we make the chebaccer boat go I tell you Ned Holmes. Well, weve been doing a real good business along shore — I bought a lot of taters down at Machias and we made seventy two dollars on em at Porchmith Then I bought a lot of jugs in Salem — cheap two tons of em and run round the cape for Rode Iland just before the Maine law got agoing there and we made eighty-four dollars on the jugs, and I carried 4 tun of onions from Boston down to Machias where they was verry skerse and made one hunderd dollars on them — So you see Ned Im doing real well and we think we may get a skooner some of these days and take Hercules for a cabin boy

I heerd the other day that your father was a coming home today and I am real glad for it must be drefful a going so fur away from home on land

Since I writ to you Ive been in Boston agin and I got lost and there wasn't nobody that would tell me the way right so I kept working to windward, up a street and then a little way along (for the streets dont run into one another as they do at Pekin and Canton and Calcutty and other places) and I was putty sure of coming to the water becos the wind was right out East — but I suppose the wind had veered for I finally worked down to Cambridge Bridge — so I steered right out to Cambridge and went to see your grandmother and she is fust rate and give me a piece of cake and a little cardboard so as to go free in the ommibuss which is along fore and aft sort of a coach, now you see if I had a been at sea why I could just a looked at the compass and could a see in a minnit what the way was that I wanted for to go.

Wednesday morning Glosishter Harbor. — I am considabel at lesshure this morning becos we cant get up to the wharf till the tide turns. I do hope your father has got home I see him once when he come down on board the ship Tightus Andromicus a laying at Centerl Wharf and perhaps he'll recollect me — Bill Butters reads his Bible every Sunday in the forenoon watch on deck weather permitting, and always pinting along the verses with a sail needle which in case all hands is called he lays in the leaves and makes fast, the book with a little rope yarn thats wove through the cover —

He's got picters of whales in the fust and last leaves that he helped take aboard the Nathaniel Folger and other ships also little memorandy, writ in signs and picters of places that he stopped at and wracks that hes been through, and you can see the marks of the salt-water on the kivers of the book. Hes got a good many funny ways with him leastwise what youd think funny alwers brings up an old quadrant a Sundays and takes an observation or pretends to tho there aint but one glass in it and dont love to be joked about it and pretends not to understand. He is dredful proud of his sea clothes of which he's got a sight — But the tides turned and I must conclude with love to you all and perticuler respect to your pa and mar

Yours truly
GOLIATH T.

Ive got a pair of sharkskin boots that we took from Shakarak one of the cheefs of the Goby men which used to come to fight with us at the Fogaroo islands that I should like to give you but they are a sight too big for you — they are dredful warm things becos they are lined with Fogaroo scalps with the fur out and their hair is dredful thick and furry. There was a man come aboard at Boston and asked me for em for the peace Societys museum but I thot he might be one of Barnums men tho he moutent either and wouldnt let him have em and he begged putty hard and Bill Butters he was a slushing the mast and he let his slush pot fall accidently right on the manshead so that he had to go right home to get cleaned up — Bill wants the boots I guess but dont like to ask for em. If your par wants the boots you tell him to drop a line to Captin Jake Souther at Glosshter and hell let me know and Ill send em round by sea so as they can go up the Kenneticut by boat, and then you can get em with a little land kerrige.

With no fixed occupation, John Holmes joyfully gave his services to good works. One of these is mentioned by Charles Eliot Norton. "I think it was between '46 and '49," he says . . . "that I got permission from the city government of Cambridge to use the schoolhouse, then standing in Garden Street, for a night school for men and boys. It was the first night school opened in Cambridge, and, as far as I know, the first of the kind in Massachusetts. I had many excellent volunteer assistants, among them John Holmes (the brother of the poet), Child, and Sidney Coolidge, a fellow of heroic quality (devoted to the memory of Napoleon), and who, years after, at the beginning of the Civil War, obtained a commission from the United States and shortly after died in battle, as he would have wished." [1]

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[1] *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton:* edited by Sara Norton and M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Boston, 1913; vol. I, pp. 26, 27.

Lowell came back from Europe in the summer of 1856, and began teaching at Harvard. With his return the Whist Club revived, much to the satisfaction of Holmes. They stimulated each other in fun. In a letter to Miss Norton, dated August 12, 1861, Lowell tells of a frolic which he arranged in honor of his humorous friend.

"Two important events have taken place lately, which I shall mention in the order of their respective greatness. 1st. The Agricultural Festival; 2d. The election of Mayor. And now of the Cerealia. (Don't confound this with Serialia and suppose I have taken up the *Atlantic* again.) You must know that Cambridge boasts of two distinguished farmers — Mr. John Holmes of Holmes Place, and him who would be, in a properly constituted order of things, the Marquess of Thompson Lot with a *p*. The marquess, fearing that (since Squire Holmes cultivated his own estate with his own hands and a camp-stool) his rival might be in want of food and too proud to confess it, generously resolved to give him a dinner, which, to save his feelings, he adroitly veiled under the pretence of an Agricultural Festival and Show of Vegetables. Dr. Howe and Mr. Storey were the other guests, 'when' (as the *Annual Register* would say) 'the following vegetables were served up with every refinement of the culinary art.' 1, Eggplants; 2, Squash; 3, Beets; 4, Carrots; 5, Potatoes; 6, Tomatoes; 7, Turnips; 8, Beans;

9, Corn; 10, Cucumbers; (and not exhibited, partly out of modesty and partly for want of suitable dishes, but alluded to modestly from time to time) 11, Cabbages; 12, Salsify. Of fruits there was a variety, also from the estate, consisting chiefly of 1, Raspberries, and 2, Blackberries. Cider, also from the estate, was kept back out of tenderness to the guests, and because there was home-made vinegar in the casters. 'After the cloth was removed,' the chairman rose, and with suitable solemnity gave the first regular toast—'Speed the Plough.' This was acknowledged by Mr. Holmes in a neat speech. He said that 'he felt himself completely *squashed* by the abundance before him. That, as there was nothing wanting, so nothing could be marked with a *caret* ∧. That Micawber himself would have been pleased with the *turnups*, than which who nose anything more charmingly *retroussé?* That he could say with the great Julius, *Veni, vidi, vici,* I came, and saw a *beet*. That he could but stammer his astonishment at a board so *cu-cumbered* with delicacies. That he envied the *potatoes* their *eyes* to look on such treasures. That the *Tom-martyrs* were worthy the best ages of the Church, and fit successors of St. Thomas. That with such *corn* who would not be a *toemartyr?* That he hoped no one would criticise his remarks in a *punkintilious* spirit.' This, as you will imagine, is quite an adequate report of the remarks he might have made. The dinner went off with great good humor and we had cards in the evening. . . .

"Your affectionate
"THOMPSON LOT"[1]

Old jokes, old puns have a way of losing their savor, and to appreciate fully Holmes's speech we must remember the occasion, the state of merriment to which he and Lowell had raised the little party of friends, and the swiftness with which, on the spur of the moment, he paid his respects to the vegetables. In devising an agricultural dinner, Lowell, the Marquess of Thompson's Lot, displayed his own talent for fun.

The time itself bred anxiety, if not gloom, in most hearts. The disaster of Bull Run, occurring only a month earlier, filled every loyal Unionist with forebodings. Lowell's patriotism was known throughout the land; Holmes in his quiet way was no less convinced a patriot.

Only a week later he suffered the greatest possible loss in the death of his mother. Dr. O. W. Holmes writes to Motley on August 29: "My mother died on the 19th of this month at the age of ninety-three, keeping her lively sensibilities and sweet intelligence to the last. My brother John had long cared for her in the most tender way, and it almost broke his heart to part with her. She was a daughter to him, she said, and he had fondly thought that love and care could keep her frail life to the filling up of a century or beyond it. It was a pity to look on him in his first grief; but Time, the great consoler, is busy with his anodyne, and he is coming back to himself."[1]

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[1] C. E. Norton: *Letters of J. R. Lowell;* vol. I, pp. 312–14.

John lived on in the old house for a little while, and then the brothers sold it to Harvard College for a price which they thought too good to be refused. Then he moved over to the small wooden dwelling at No. 5 Appian Way, which an old family servant, Mary Tolman, bought with her savings. There she acted as his housekeeper, tending him as carefully as she knew how for the rest of his life.

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[1] J. T. Morse, Jr.: *Oliver Wendell Holmes* (1896); vol. II, pp.164–65.

CHAPTER III

"A RIGHT LOCAL MAN"

JOHN BARTLETT had now become, after Lowell, Holmes's most intimate friend in Cambridge, and as time went on, and Lowell spent many years abroad, Holmes saw more and more of him. The latter combined the ability of a successful merchant with the taste of a literary man. In order to prepare his "Familiar Quotations" he read the classics of ancient and modern literature; he spent most of his leisure during the last third of his working life on Shakespeare; and he had a retentive memory. Towards the end of 1862 he went South, as a volunteer paymaster in the United States Navy.

The next letters, unusually playful, refer to his service there.

TO JOHN BARTLETT[1]

CAMBRIDGE, *December* 8, 1862.
Toward evening.

MY DEAR J. B.,

After my pleasant dinner on board the Bibb, I proceeded to Cambridge, as a desolate fragment of the once glorious Association in favor of the Union of which you were another member. I did not call at your house until the next evening, thinking the delay would be acceptable. As I passed over the Common on my way to your house I called a meeting at the centre and called your name; there being no reply I answered in a loud tone, "Absent," and mournfully adjourned for want of a quorum. I hope you will recognise in this the old patriotism and the old regard unbroken by separation. I hope also that in the strict adherence to form you will perceive evidence of that love of order, indeed of discipline, which has heretofore distinguished the Association and at times has led it to assume an almost military character. (Note: Do we not both recollect J. B. in his inimitable personation of the well drilled recruit?) Happily for me, since you went I have been obliged to travel to Boston and back, if anything, more frequently than before, and to attend to items of business [which], with my business talents and habits, appear to me to be numerous and laborious. With these to employ me, and a great deal of walking, and some little change in my social habits to meet the exigency, I have got along rather better than might have been expected; I have however had to train myself somewhat, perforce, to solitude. I have thus far told you about myself. I will now tell you about you. Mrs. Bartlett on Saturday evening last read to me in full family conclave, *a part of* your letter from Port Royal — when she came to the sentimental and conjugal part, she stopped a second, and nimbly skipped it all, so that I have no chance to know whether you write with the proper degree of tenderness or not; perhaps, as the other member of the Association, I ought to have had the whole letter submitted to my notice, that I might write you words of approval, encouragement or reproof—but we won't be too strict, and the family were all present. It was an excellent letter, so much of it as I heard, and worthy the author of the Quotations. And so the Paymaster was a little sick—did n't $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{lose}\\ \text{throw up}\end{matrix}\right\}$ his waistcoat buttons or jerk the gold band off his cap, I hope. But I am afraid that under a playful turn of phrase you conceal the extent of your suffering, not from laudable [regard] of humanity to your friends but from a misplaced pride. I shall therefore present you with a probable Deposition of the Steward as supposed to be taken at Port Royal.

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[1] This letter is in very bad condition, and a small piece of it is missing.

Qu. 1.	Was Mr. Bartlett sick on the passage to Port Royal?	*Ans.* 1.	Yes sir, he were.
2.	At what time did he first show signs of seasickness?	2.	When we was alongside the Fort, Sir.
3.	What Fort?	3.	Fort Independence, Sir.
4.	What made you think him sick at that time?	4.	Coz he looked white, Sir, and said the sugar he took in his coffee that morning didn't agree with him and said he felt first rate all but that.

Qu. 5. Where was he when he said this?	*Ans.* 5. Down below, Sir.
6. Why should you think him seasick when he said he was so well?	6. Coz they all says so, Sir, and looks kind er white Sir, and I always gets my (sivat) ready then, Sir.
7. Where did you see him next?	7. Leanin over the rail, Sir, heavin like anything.
8. When did you first see him on deck after this?	8. After we was come to anchor, Sir, at Port Royal.

What do you think of that as a specimen of what would be brought out by close examination? If you had said candidly, "I was as sick as a dog all the way to Port Royal," you would have saved me the trouble of taking this deposition.

I enjoyed your meeting with Capt. Conthoys, at the Naval Constructor's — he verified all that you had said of his vivacity, and I think made your account pale a little before the actual fact. He is a very agreeable man too, as you said. In my quiet mode of life I have not so much to tell you as I could wish, even respecting our familiar Old Cambridge. One thing I can say about it, that I never knew it in so profound a state of tranquillity, not to say stupor, in my life, at any rate since it was the little hamlet of former times. None of the accustomed sounds are heard at night — the vociferations of young men coming down jolly from

Porter's or going up jolly from the oyster shops — no firebell, for the incendiaries have gone to extinguish the flames of civil war — no dogs, because they have nobody and nothing to bark at, and the roosters ceasing to hear, the dogs have stopped crowing.

About 9½. Since writing the above I have been over to your house. I found Mrs. B., Mrs. Dana and Miss Dana, all I think at work for the soldiers. Capt. Goodwin bye-and-bye came down, and very shortly after Mrs. Folsom and Miss Charlotte McKean came in. I had a pleasant call of it till about 9, when I departed as escort to Mrs. F. and her sister, whom I saw safely home. I went over to your house to ask about my letter, which it seems I commit to the Boston Office tomorrow. I have thus given you a slight sketch of my evening. I ought however to have mentioned that before I went to your house I purchased a *Journal* at the establishment, paying 3! cents for the same — see the extortion which has grown since you left. You must write me your personal experience and sensations as I have written mine. Tell me too whether gingerbread, which I advised so strongly, has been a balm to your afflicted stomach. Tell me your joys and your woes and I will answer to the best of my ability in the name of the Association. Tell me *inter alia* how you succeed as caterer, and whether you find considerable leisure on board the Bibb — how the pipe works in a Southern climate.

Also, as writing to the Association, tell me how things look to you down there — and any good expectations you have about this war so far as consistent with the profound secrecy which has been observed about our movements.

I wish you all sorts of a pleasant time down there.

Give my regards to Capt. Boutelle. As I left the house tonight Mrs. Bartlett desired me to send her love to you, which I hereby do and expect a receipt by your next.

Hoping to see you in a few months in first rate condition

I am truly your friend

P.S. You must make the best of this letter that you can; when you write me I shall be able to reply to any enquiry or to any train of thought you may suggest. At present I write what I can at random. Good night.

Yrs truly

To John Bartlett

Cambridge, *January* 21, 1863.

My dear J. B.,—

It is high time that you should hear from your old friend and fellow soldier, J. H. You would have had a letter from me much earlier but for the continuance of what I denominate business, which has kept me what I call busy. About a month ago, in the height of this so-called activity, I twisted the veteran knee a little with the slippery walking and forthwith limped in a style I never had before — not with the accustomed infirmity, but a strain where the knee-pan is fastened on — on the side — I forthwith began to fear the return of the old affliction — was obliged to stay quiet a good deal — then as usual my eyes got overworked and I seemed quite in the doleful condition of former times — not giving up walking but able to do little of it. However, the evil has passed away and I can go a mile or two at a time very well, and I must say feel in better spirits to write a letter to a friend than I did before. So you see I have begun as usual with a full exposition of my bodily state and am now ready to begin with narrative, argument or exhortation as the case may require.

And, firstly, let me acknowledge the receipt of your very agreeable letter, also of your very capital New Year's Gift, and thank you for both. I have neither given nor taken much this New Year. I made a few presents of trifles to children and no other — I received De Tocqueville from you first, and a nice pipe from Charles Parson's wife, second, and am content — nay, thankful; without calculation you see, I have made a gain; this is the relative and financial view which you and I as philosophers and speculatists will admit argumentatively; but really I have received two tokens from two valued friends and am richer by a value that cannot be defined under the head of $ and cts. My habits have been a good deal changed, as I expected, by your departure. No more free-and-easy bachelor comings and goings. When I call now I cast anchor and accept nothing less than a yawn or positive lethargy as a signal to weigh. My evening walks are no longer the circuitous vague ramblings of the past, argumentative, conversational, land-measuring, fumigatory — but hasty, silent, the shortest line between two points. This came across me the other night in a lively manner, when I deviated for exercise from my direct path and found myself under the college lamp opposite Stoughton. A certain military discipline, whose force you and I know, held me up and I plodded sternly on. I sometimes look back with admiration to you in your attitude of highest military training, which you remember you occasionally assumed (say in entering a door or scaling a flight of stairs). Nothing, I venture to say, in the annals of military art ever surpassed that.

I have been in to about half of Charles Norton's Lowell lectures[1] (historical), which ended about a fortnight since, quite a novelty for me, and a very pleasant one. I went to Salem at Thanksgiving and dined at the Fosters' on Christmas. Club has gone on with its usual regularity and is mine this week on Friday. During Norton's lectures, which Lowell attended, we had Club on Wednesdays.

[1] On "Characteristics of the 12th Century."

I called at your house last night and found all well. Mrs. Bartlett propounded to me the probability of the safe arrival of her mince pies and after mature deliberation I decided in favor thereof. May my self-esteem and your palate be gratified by the result.

About a week since I called at your house and Mrs. B. told me that letters had arrived from the Bibb, and that she had none, and you have no idea how your little wife was let down from her usually buoyant temperament. If you wish me to enjoy my calls you must write punctually. Not that there was an omission in this case — the letter, I have found, came to hand the next morning. In fact, the next evening I was at the Howes' and mentioned the disappointment. They said that they had seen Mrs. B. going along reading a letter, and guessed that she had heard from you, and she told me last evening that that was the case. I believe I shall tell her that in case of non-reception of letters from you I wish she would get Mr. Goodwin to make a bowline or a Matthew Walker's knot on the handle of the door, so that I may be aware of the fact.

I went to a private dinner given Gen. Butler last Thursday night at the Parker House — private so-called — in distinction from the regular public dinner, and not reported in the papers. There were 120 people and the affair went off well. The Gen'l. wore a black coat and made himself agreeable —

spoke about 15 minutes, or say 30, with great applause. I as a military man took great interest in the proceedings.

Henry Ware works at the State House now, has grown fat — and is seen but little by his friends so far as I hear — enjoys himself at home I suppose like a sensible man. Carter I am told is keeping school at Eagle's Wood, N.J.

Thursday aft^{n}. Thus far I had got yesterday when I was obliged to go to Boston, where I dined with Wendell, who highly appreciated your present which I mentioned to him. What! that splendid edition, said he — I affirmed and told him that the publisher *de jure* was our paymaster; the same by the way who, having revised a new edition of the Bibb at the Navy Yard, has published it at Port Royal.

I have got two more letters to write, so must close this with despatch. When you write again tell me all about yourself, — whether you have stood sea life well and feel at home as a Bibber. Whether you have had any more stomachic ~~e~~motions (no, I will cross out the e) when the billows have rolled you about. — Whether you have "hove up" anything beside the anchor — how your baccy holds out, and various such items which will give me a notion of your average domestic life a Bibboard. I have not sent any newspapers — if you would like them write me word; or anything else. I have been your Military Inspector at home — I intend to be your Naval Inspector abroad; you will therefore report to me all important circumstances in your naval career — and all trivialities which will keep me acquainted with your condition. If ever you take a glass of grog on a bowline you may report it. But if you take one with a Matthew Walker's knot in it (which implies extra hair on) you must on no account fail to tell me the occasion and the effects physical and moral. Tell me when you get your most cheering pipes and whether you do not recur occasionally to our night sessions and arguments. If I don't hear from you soon I shall hold a meeting on the Common, report you absent without leave — and order you to be executed five minutes after landing in this precinct. It is a cloudy day with an inch or so of snow on the ground and Buddy lies in the old armchair by the window — half awake, half asleep cogitating why you don't call in. I walked out of town yesterday — but took no circuit in the evening as of the olden time.

If you wish me to write more information about the old town, propound me questions to any amount and I will answer.

N.B. This is the end of my letter. I can't write you a very various letter, having — as when you were here — been in a very small circle of action and vision. I can only stir you up with a few suggestions from home. Mary seeing me writing expressed a desire to be remembered to you. I shall not wait so long next time to write. Remember me to Capt. Boutelle.

Yours affectionately.

No other of John Holmes's war-time letters have been found; nor was it to be expected; for while he felt strongly the national ordeal and the distresses which it caused to multitudes of private persons, he was not likely to write formally upon it. He never wrote formally on any topic, but let whim suggest and fancy elaborate the substance of his correspondence.

To J. R. Lowell

May 28, 1863.

Either come down at 8.30 and be beaten into bench-holes, or appear on the ground at the latest by 9½ tomorrow morning.

I had an expedition to mention to you, "most secret, most important," of a peremptory character, admitting no delay if assented to on your part.

No man who had not hunted a low at 2.40 could be admitted to confidence. I forgot to tell you when you were here.

Come with punctuality as requested, either now when you receive this, the sun barely low, or by the jack-a-lanterns that light the marsh, or, making game of difficulties, come when Phœbus is but an hour high — you shall find me with my crutch at the charge.

Come in high lows.

Now from a new plane of thought as the modern phrase is — If you don't wish to play, stroll down for a contemplative walk. But observe there is an expedition possibly, and after 10 or so it would be too late.

The next letter contains an early reference to John Holmes's lameness, due to some trouble of his knee from which he never recovered. At the worst he could not walk at all; but he often enjoyed months of comparative freedom from pain when he limped about with considerable ease.

To J. R. Lowell

May 3, 1867.

I can't possibly have Club tonight, or would; mean to have it next week. I was glad to see you all alive and walking and not looking at all Δροψικαλ (dropsical).

To J. R. Lowell

Seest thou these little dots
Which a naughty world calls blots?
Each is only liquid thought —
Dribbling where (it *had not* ought).*

Waller writing to Peter Clement.

* Is n't this rather strange diction?

Cambridge, W, *June* 9, 1869.

I have been thinking of a letter to you ever since you departed. Last evening at friend Gurney's,[1]

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[1] Ephraim W. Gurney, Harvard A. B. 1852; Professor of History.

I learned that you were coming home on Saturday. I write therefore with a degree of trepidation lest you should turn your back on my letter, leaving it to pine in an Ithaca P.O. box. It is as generous and as reckless for me to write you now, as it would have been for the prodigal son to have offered to treat the village on his return. It occurs to me, however, that he might have done it if he could have obtained credit, the chances of which are matter of opinion. Such credit as he in tatters, with a remainder husk sticking out of his pocket, would have needed with the publican, I need and demand from you, for Lo, I am poor in thought, and husky with drouth, having brought myself to a minimum of the rosy. I only write this to signify my sense of your absence, and my desire for your return, which is warm and lively. Yea, verily, I shall welcome you with fervor to our native bounds.

All is quiet here: loads of brick going to Boston and of manure coming from Boston indicate a solid prosperity and incidentally make our bad roads worse. Club is a word unknown. The Doctor is a little lost I think without it — not quite himself — Tracy is cheerfully resigned. I am stolidly tranquil.

Frank Chapman's vehiculary was set on fire at about 1, Sunday morning, May 30. When I got there one steamer was playing upon a formidable mass of flame: it was some time before another came — there were three in all, I think — and they had the fire under in about an hour. There were no hand-engines, and in consequence there was no bellowing and counter-bellowing. It was curious to see the quiet of the whole proceeding. There was the fire serpent doing his best — drawing in a coil under the attack and rolling himself up as if done for, and then shooting out a tongue of flame in some new spot — then the engines going click, click, click, and that was all their noise — then there was the audience or the spectance, which in the absence of the usual fire clamor was perfectly quiet — young men and maidens looking on as if at a show, and I think a man of moderate voice might have spoken a discourse so that all would have heard him.

Such a scene is rather distant from the "Lane," and the "*friendly*" firebuckets that you and I remember.

I read your lines on the bell last evening and highly approve them. . . .

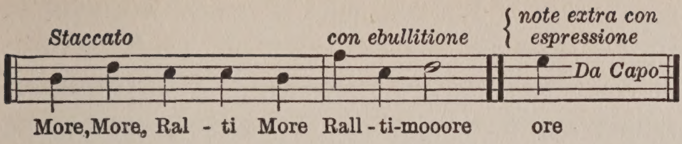
Hoping that this testimonial of friendship may reach you in season, I am

Your loving friend.

To J. R. Lowell

January 26, 1870.

I am pleased with your rhythmic note, and will march up on Thursday rhythmically to the Quickstep, as composed by J. R. L. and arranged by J. H.


Staccato
con ebullitione
note extra con espressione
Da Capo
More, More, Ral - ti More Rall - ti-mooore ore

If I come so soon again it can't help being as a sort of transient boarder. One or two more such friends as you and friend Gurney, and I should be at free quarters. I will come with a great deal of pleasure and I thank you for the invitation.

Yours affectionately.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *March* 3, 1870.

I am right glad to hear of your return from distant lands. I should be pleased to present you with the freedom of the city in a gold box, but you know how scarce gold is. I therefore present you with the freedom without the box.

To my surprise I met the Doctor last night and had the presence of mind to give him notice of Club Friday night *chez moi.*

I give you the same. Hereof fail not, etc.

I shall take it for granted that Mrs. Lowell has returned improved by her journey and, this being established, please present her with my congratulations thereupon. I am sorry to have missed you.

The correspondent to whom the next letter is addressed, Dr. Charles Eliot Ware, was a college companion of Holmes, who practised medicine in Boston, and had for a summer place a large farm at West Rindge, New Hampshire. There he entertained many companions, most welcome among whom was John Holmes. These two men grew closer together as they advanced toward old age, and a third, Waldo Higginson, usually joined them. As they sat on the piazza of the old farmhouse and looked at Monadnock in front of them, there was talk which, had it been preserved in the phonograph, would have delighted readers today.

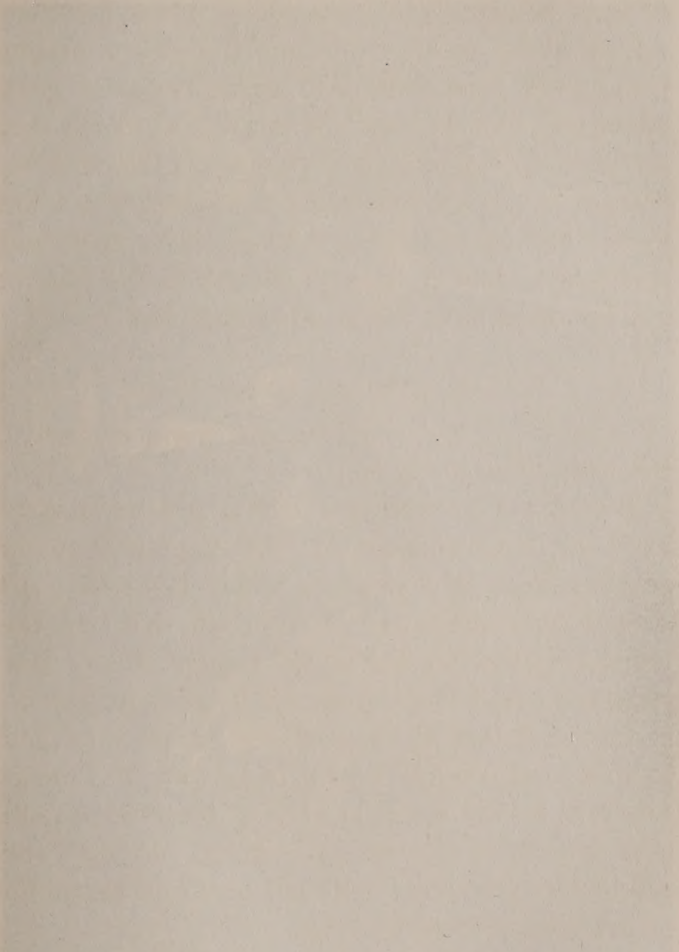
To Dr. Charles Eliot Ware

Cambridge, *August* 16, 1871.

My dear Charles, —

Your letter arrived just after I had gone away from my new quarters in the Appian Way on an expedition to Plymouth, where I stayed until Thursday, August 11. I went on this trip the morning after the first night I spent in my new quarters, and I think it served a good purpose to make the change of abode easier. I am very glad to hear from you and I want to see you. If I meditate any formal invasion of your premises I shall give you due notice as you suggest, but with the railroad so near you I shall not be afraid to run up on my own account and risk.

At present I find myself constrained by forty different circumstances from attempting to visit you. I found it far more of a task, in its material



DR. CHARLES ELIOT WARE, JOHN HOLMES, AND WALDO HIGGINSON

difficulties, than I thought, to change my quarters. I had to look over piles and piles of rubbish, some going back to the year 1715 or thereabout. The business papers and account books of my great-grandfather had been kept in the attic one hundred and fifty-six years, to give his great-grandson what between us might be called a sweat (and a very copious one). I found commercial letters referring to Prince Charles Edward's invasion, and such letters as contained any historical allusions I saved, and burned the residue, something under forty bushels. What with reading, selecting, burning, packing and the general sense of dislocation attending removal, I could have sat for a portrait of John Calvin, so far as sternness or severity was demanded. This severe look I acquired in burning the masses of paper against which I had conceived a certain rage for the trouble they had put me to. I hope I had not got so bad as to regret that they could not yell a little. I do not think I had. Cambridge is in the most furious stage of improvement heretofore known. They build, they remove buildings, they add and subtract parts, and at last have come to disembowelling large structures of recent erection with a fury like that of the Bacchanals, that they may have the luxury of replacing the viscera. The Scientific School Building and a very large schoolhouse on Brattle Street are being subjected to this process. Only a few of the true old Cambridge stock retain their equanimity during the tumult. And ours is the calmness of despair. Old Cambridge is almost gone and the New has taken its place.

We have to fall back on the simple memories of what are our old times, and in such quiet precincts gather ourselves to resist the uproar of the present day. Excuse my prosing.

Yours affectionately.

The episode, slight but characteristic, of which John S. Dwight writes in the following letter to George William Curtis belongs to this period.

"The evening before your letter came I spent in Cambridge with my dear friend John Holmes, who has been laid up lame, but is getting better. I must tell you of a little thing he related to me, as showing the delicacy of his character. I chanced to say that, driven to the last extremity, unable to write or read or think, I had taken up 'Pickwick Papers' again. Said he, 'I never met Dickens but once: that was at James Lowell's. Mention was made of some little-known book of Walter Scott, and Dickens said to me: "You ought to have that. When I get home, I will send it to you."' John said, 'I replied: "Oh, no, my dear sir. I cannot allow that. If you make such a promise, it will bother you more than it is worth,"' or something like that."[1]

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[1] G. W. Cooke: *John Sullivan Dwight*, p. 287. Boston, 1898.

To J. R. Lowell

[1870?].

Mi Care Jacobe,—

Puta quomodo sentibam Friday postremo, cum inveniebam quod Doctor non erat eundus ad Fustem. Supponebam ut Doctor appellant pro me nuntiare ad te causam meae absentrae; sed contrario modo Johannes, Celtus, ad portam venit cum epistola, dequa inveni ut Doctor capitis malum habebat et moratatur ad domum invito. Misi Johannem cum epistola ad Traceium et exitum totae rei nescio; sive Traceius solus ad Fustem ibat; sive Fustem habebas, sive dolore et ira Fuste amisso pendisti te ad trabem, causa non apparente defectionis, sic ut nunc apparet, si vivis et non suspensus finsti.

Tibi profiteor quod sentio male in praemissis (ut dicunt jurisperiti).

Αγχυλον nuper tortum (id est in '63) retorsi quantulum et post quiddam experimentum timeo ambulare, ne sim tanto majus retentus domi.

Invenio quod tu habebas fustem post me,— tunc Doctor, tunc Traceius; sic mihi occurrebat Fustem habere quum Doctor illum habebat; errorem confiteor. Hoc Friday non possum Fustem habere possibiliter — proximo, spero habere (nec "possum" ludo, hoc dicendo).

Spero *αγχυλον* usuni cito recuperare et tunc apparere bonus Fustor.

Interea dico, "Fustis; et nunquam Bunkeret desuper."

Cum multa amicitia
Tuus
J. H.

I make no attempt to inject grammatical or other correctness into this letter and the following.

To J. R. Lowell

Die quam appellato inter
Romanos, nescio; inter nos,

Thursday, November 30 [1870?].

Care Jacobus, —

Ut cogitatum me transportare ad tuum domum *αγκυλος* recalcitravit et crutch revocavit. Tristissimus me sedebam prope foculum meum appellatum populariter *ενγινε* Hodie *αγκυλος* melior ego jucundior. Fidissime confido te videre "Fusti" cras vespera. Paupertatem ingenii obscuro sub Xatimtate monstrosissima. Si praevideram hanc novissimam clauditatem citior Scripsissem Postremo "Fuste" Stetimus quatuor ad quatuor, et si tempus suffecerat Traceius et ego stragem veram feceramus. Appellas id "Contundi in cavos plaustir"? Shaksp. quod tu futiliter voluisti, epistola postrema. Gutturem tuum nunc robustum validum, amplum-ins-issimum spero esse.

Moderate tristis
Vester
J. H.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE,
Monday evening [no date] [1870?].

MY DEAR JAMES LOWELL,—

I want to have Club on Wednesday evening (the Doctor can't come on Thursday). Please arrange if possible for it.

We expect to have the noted pedestrian, Carter, on that occasion. He has just won his great match against time — two miles and a half in twenty-four hours. He is getting on well, and there is little doubt of his being able to come. All we fear now is colic, and he will not take the only specific — brandy, but I hope he won't have it.

To J. R. Lowell

WEDNESDAY, *December* 3 [no date].

Can you do me the kindness to come over here for a little while this evening. There is a very pretty moon now, — so the almanac says, and the weather is to the eye of the philosopher inviting. You and I are happily elevated above those vulgar prejudices which lead some to asperse the harmony of the elements called weather.

There is a delicious howl at this moment that makes me ache to get out; but what can a man do, with any number of lame legs?

By the way, if you should see a cord of good crutch-wood, please purchase it for me, and if you should want a little liniment, or opodeldoc or bay rum, (which does n't put people over the bay) or a crutch to go a-pleasuring with, or a genteel but serviceable cane, or any such nicknack, why you know where to come.

I'm sure I hope you'll never be lame, unless with a well-earned, and transient gout. I should not like to see you reduced to the low speed of ¼ of a mile an hour, which we call good.

To J. R. Lowell

Thursday 12 A.M. [1872?].

I thank you much for the volume of Essays[1] which I found when I returned from Salem.

This condensed body of criticism and biography (which latter is antechamber to History) is vastly more valuable to me than the parts of it scattered here and there, and I read it with much greater pleasure. The miser's stocking stuffed with zechins, moidores, joes, or whatever savory time-flavored coin you please, is what he hugs to his heart and puts under his pillow. His bills and bonds are collectible but this is collected. It is the difference between many children abroad and one at home — that one he can hug or flog at pleasure, the others he must wait for. The miser, I must say now I think of him as a poet and a martyr. He lives for the ideal and if necessary will die the slowest hardest death for it.

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[1] Probably Lowell's *My Study Windows*, published in 1872.

His sublime self-sacrifice for the abstract principle, represented maybe by the fraction of a cent, wants nothing but another base to ennoble him. His fortitude and energy are as good as another's, his motive power we regretfully condemn at base.

The miser is almost the only exceptionable character that wants a coat of whitewash now. (You have read the Memoir of Barabbas in which he is shown to have been a collector of taxes and Sunday School teacher of the most benevolent disposition, accused and imprisoned for his fidelity in office, by malignant taxpayers. I don't blame the taxpayers myself.)

Let us suppose that the miser has with infinite pains and privations drawn together his little pile of coins, may he not possibly feel toward them as if they were his children? He keeps the social group together and at home through pangs of hunger and cold which he endures for their dear sakes. If he prudently lends the services of his family for a season to others, it is only for their interest, as other fathers of family do.

He robs no man, he only keeps his own. To the poor and suffering he administers instead of a partial relief, a comprehensive remedy.

He says, "Bear privations as I do! Put such waifs of old iron and the like as you can collect, into a bag—add to it constantly on principle, and you are as comfortable as I am." And if there are no children short of food and raiment he speaks the truth.

The future advocate of the miser will say: Do you admire the speed, strength and energy of a man any the less because he is running in the wrong direction, etc., etc., and then the physiologists will find out some new twist about the mechanical action in some folks' constitutions, on motives, and the Miser will be rehabilitated and we shall have a statue to Remember Preston, and everything will be very comfortable and friendly.

I foresee a time when a statue will be erected to the man who refused with ferocity to enter the list of competitive contributors to some public or private object and slew the agent.

I hope that I foresee a time when men having explored all the passages that lead to nothing, and having sufficiently tried to lift themselves by their waistbands, and to walk on their heads, will find some plain truths, enough to live and die by.

Application. I admire and very highly value your book and enjoy it most enjoyably. And am

Yours affectionately,

J. H

CHAPTER IV

A TRIP TO EUROPE, 1872–73

In the summer of 1872 John Holmes started on a trip to Europe. What prompted him to undertake this long journey in spite of his lameness and his love of routine does not appear. He was sixty years old, and, although he lived in solitary quarters in Appian Way, he was always within easy reach of friends; but in Europe he could count only on chance acquaintances to relieve his loneliness. He planned, however, to join the Lowells and the Henry Wares, who were abroad at that time. Indeed Lowell and he crossed on the same steamer.

To John Bartlett

London, *July* 24, 1872.
Tavistock Hotel.

I met a finback whale going home to Massachusetts Bay. I thought he looked a little maliciously at me as if to say, What are you up to on board that boat? but I took no notice. If I thought he winked at me I should never forgive him.

My dear J. B., Oh, my dear J. B.,—

After near 48 hours of solitary confinement at the modest hotel whose name you behold hereon, heretofore, and hereabove, impressed, I write to my friend, fellow countryman, and adversary (*qua* whist[1]) that he may enjoy, and sympathize with my sufferings. I landed at Liverpool on Saturday night at about 9, or say 10, o'clock, and having passed the custom house, which put us through with great civility and speed, I partly walked, partly cabbed to the Adelphi Hotel with two travelling companions; and almost as soon as there, sallied forth with the night porter to get a hat. I had crossed the Atlantic with my old straw — which very often showed which way the wind blew, but was squashed on to my head so that nothing but a cyclone could have stirred it. Well, my dear J. B., I bought the jimmiest little curled-up concern of a hat perhaps to be found in all England. I have not seen anything in London equal to it yet — it is a dreadful contrast to my gloomy aspect as I move about within prison bounds. I laugh inwardly at my desolation — but outwardly must be the image of solitary woe. It is a first-rate thing for an old fellow who has been such a home stayer as I have been. You see the way of it was this — James Lowell with divers other of our passengers, quite a number, elected to land at Queenstown and make a trip to Killarney, Giant's Causeway, etc. Now I have no sympathy with giants, who, I think, are nuisances, and I am too staunch a Cambridge man to wish to raise a rival to Fresh Pond — these with divers reasons of prudence regarding *the* leg and a certain desire to see the whole length of Irish Channel down which I buffed it and roughed it in '39, induced me to go on for Liverpool, where I arrived as aforementioned, with my hat the color of an extinct volcano.

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[1] Charles W. Storey.

Now then, having taken a pull at the pint of ale by my side, I proceed. I slept and breakfasted at the Adelphi and on Sunday forenoon went with pleasant companions to Chester — partly steamer, partly R.R. — about an hour's trip — and with them put up at the Grosvenor Hotel — a very nice house. Then on Monday at 1.30 I took the train for London, with one companion only who was bound for a West End Hotel while I preferred, having no acquaintance, to come to this house, where I stayed a short time nearly 33 years since.

With certain desperation I demanded a good room not forty miles up, although I meant to come here at all events. Well, sure enough they gave me a very accessible and very decent room — but so dark! I felt a strong desire to recommence the cultivation of mushrooms (which you know, maybe, I attempted in the cellar of our old house) but I repressed it, and devoted myself to an interior melancholy — with a highly amused exterior observance of the same. If you could have seen me go in to dinner it would have done you good — so solemn — my eyes directed at nothing so far as I could make them act unanimously, and I am sure Burleigh or Cecil could n't have beat me for intense gravity of aspect.

I had the presence of mind to call for a ½ pint of sherry, which acclimated me a little. After dinner I adjourned soon to the smoking-room, and somehow or other stuck it out till bed-time, and I really think that if I had been astride of the projecting part of one of the poles with a large icicle to hang on to, I should have felt as social as where I was. This was Monday evening. Tuesday — yesterday — I did n't advance much till dinner-time, when a pleasant invalid Englishman addressed me first. I hope I shall meet him today at dinner. He was just like any quiet, good Yankee. This may be accounted for by the fact that he was born in Boston, (England) but now living in the South of England. He rather insisted on my partaking of and finishing the strawberries which he had called for. I ate a few of them — they were very good indeed — with plenty of flavor — this on the 23d July. It thundered and lightened during dinner in true American style — they have n't seen the like of it in London for many years.

I have not walked out to any distance till today. I took a cab to the Strand and to Charing Cross, and after making one or two small purchases walked back.

I have not been to Baring Bros. yet — my gold holding out and more. Tomorrow I think I shall present my letter of credit. I may go over to Holland and up the Rhine before James L[owell] comes. I love to look at the Englishmen as they come into the Coffee room — a pretty stalwart set the most of them — and I am much taken with their fine chest voices — this is a trait (physical) that impresses me a good deal.

One of these Englishmen last evening reminded me of your partner, Mr. Flagg, and I am waiting for one to come who shall remind me of J. B. I ought to thank you for my sea chair, which was of service to me and many others on the passage.

The passage was a quiet one but colder than a man would think leaving Boston on the 9th. Take care of yourself — when you write keep me advised of the health of the firm. Give my love to Mrs. Bartlett and believe me

Yours aff.

After a stay in London, Holmes went to Germany and then to Vienna. After other wanderings he settled for the winter in Paris at the Hôtel de Lorraine, 7 Rue de Beaune.

"J. H. came back to us day before yesterday," Lowell writes Norton, May 1, 1873, "after a month in Italy where he did not much enjoy himself. He says that he has become a thorough 'misoscopist' or hater of sights. He goes home in June, and I shall miss him more than I like to think."[1]

Norton, then in London, writes in his journal: "Lowell always carried too much of Cambridge with him, and John Holmes and he have managed to make the Quays and Rue de Rivoli mere continuations of Brattle Street."

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[1] *Letters of J. R. Lowell,* vol. II, p. 98.

Assuredly, Holmes did carry Cambridge about with him. In Venice he used to go every day to one commonplace spot, because it reminded him of the junction of Broadway and Cambridge Street in the Lower Port. His love of his native town was quickened by absence. He undertook what we may call a sentimental journey to Denmark, in the hope of finding there a chance traveling companion whom he fell in with on his first trip to Europe in 1839. On arriving at his destination, he learned that his friend had been dead nearly thirty years. After taking a hurried glimpse of Edinburgh and York, he met the Wares and they all sailed homeward from Liverpool on the Siberia.

To J. R. Lowell

Dresden, *August* 28, 1872.

I have been wandering in strange lands since I saw you, and am now "zurück" in Dresden, trying to lay in a few words of High Dutch.

It is astonishing with what ease the natives speak this difficult tongue. The dumb animals know about as much of it as I do. "*Kommen,*" and they come, — "*Gehen,*" and they go. It is a fortnight tomorrow since I left you, and you left me, for I suppose you went *recht* to Cumberland. When you get this you will advise me of your movements — and I will try to make mine agree. I think now of staying here a week or ten days, looking at pictures and the like, and intend to become a connoisseur. Sky lines (*Vide* Col. T. A.), perspectives and chiaroscuros will be among my smallest hoards. I hope to invent something — say katoptric.

With all this I am in a very modest mood. I am at the Hotel Zum Goldner Engel, where I am on short allowance of English, I assure you, and it is submiraculous that I have got here — for all the Deutsch I have used, I might have worked down to the Black Sea by this time, which I am thankful I did not do. I never was more scanted for lingo, surely.

Well now you must write me straightway and mayhap you will like to come over here and renew your acquaintance with the Professor, and so with much love to you and Mrs. Lowell I am

Yours affectionately.

Thursday forenoon.

I have nothing special to add, and yet therefore I add something. It seems inhospitable (for want of a better word) to send so vacant a letter. Here am I *ganz allein*, keeping myself company in a surprising manner. I am now a good deal wanted at the Hotel Zum Goldne Engel (I don't pretend to spell German).

I want very much to hear from you and am hoping that you both have had a royal (Koeniglicher) time in England. I have very much my native tongue vergotten, so pardon mistakes.

To J. R. Lowell

Dresden, *September* 23, 1872.
Monday.

I received your welcome note of September 18 on Saturday afternoon, the 21st. I began to fear that you or Mrs. L. might be ill and hindered from returning to London.

Ich bin ganz freudig, zufrieden heiter lustig fröhlich to find that you are all right.

I mean to wait here for an answer to this, that we may form a plan of junction. If you write me on the instant, I ought to receive your letter by next Tuesday, the 30th.

I wish you would tell me how long you mean to stay in Paris, and where to go from there.

I recollect that you spoke of living for a while in some quiet French town; this suits my views exactly.

Please write with all minuteness possible about your plans.

I shall probably leave here immediately on receiving your answer. I think of going to Denmark for a few days, and after that, according to what I hear from you, follow you more or less directly. I may wish to go into Bavaria and into the Erckmann-Chatrian localities, and so to Paris, or other point as you may write me. If you are going to be for several weeks at Paris or are going thence to any French town to reside a certain time, as above mentioned, I can wander about a little as well as not.

I have been re-re-reading Thiers a little: with regard to the fighting around Dresden in 1813. I find myself a little infected with strategy — have thought of sending my baggage down the left bank of the Elbe (there is no navigation from here), while I go on the right, uniting the two columns at the mouth of the river and so occupy a position on your flank if you should attempt to go back to England. Practically however as I have no force to escort the baggage, and the amount is very small, I shall take it with me and make no show of science. I made a distribution of boots to my forces on Saturday — in other words got a pair $6.28, capacious, strong and ugly.

I have now staid a month here, exclusive of my trip to Vienna. I suppose that I am about a ninth as well acquainted with Dresden as you are. My intellectual being has surely enlarged itself little, and my corporeal has shrunken I am certain. . . . When I look in the glass and see the "old gent" who presents himself, I say "Well my good Sir and what brought *you* here?" . . .

I have this moment received a letter from Rowse — I have read it, and Oh, how funny! Tell him he has shaken my enfeebled constitution badly — tell him my miseries are all real and I truly hope his are — there is no use in either of us shamming under such circumstances — misery and solitude are my only companions and friends.

Kind remembrances, etc.

To J. R. Lowell

Drükheim, *October* 27, '72.

I received yours (not dated, but postmarked the 25th) with the very greatest pleasure. I began to fear that you had left Paris, and left some notice for me where to follow, and your letter was an *immense* satisfaction.

I by no means think of depreciating your letter, when I say that it does n't take much to make a holiday for me in Dürkheim — but it was the first enlivening event since my arrival at this terraced, wine-growing, honest, bottled town. The bottles here are such as for one-third of a century I have not seen — I can't say bottomless, for what bottle I tearfully ask has not a bottom — but these bottles wear no bustles — their bottom is but a thin spectrum between the wine and perdition, — and you know, James, that our bottles at home are all bottom — Yea, *All Bottom.*

I was delighted with your energetic call to me to come on and join you. If I should stay two days longer here I think you would hardly mind it, — and I should arrive very soon after my letter.

I should n't mind paying for a day or two for any good room which such payment would keep for me. The prospect of being with you and Rowse[1] in comfortable quarters is beyond measure satisfactory — but my now dear bosom companion and bedfellow, Misery, begs me to stay and suffer two days more, and I can hardly deny her. She is reasonably jealous of her rival, Happiness, and she sounds it in my ear: "Old gent, have n't I been true to you? Have n't I stuck by you? Do you know H.? [meaning Happiness]" I answer modestly, "My dear M., I have no more than a passing acquaintance with her." "I am glad to hear you say so," says M. "She is the ficklest — wantonest jade. Oh if I could only tell you all that I know about her!" "You need n't say a word M." (I reply), "your dear, old, wizened woe-begone face is enough for me — you are reliable — I will try to stay two days in Dürkheim."

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[1] Samuel W. Rowse, American artist; famous for crayon portraits.

Age, I hope not quite dotage, has made me write on the wrong side of the paper but you won't mind this.

With love to you and Mrs. L. and kind regards to Rowse, I am

Yours affectionately.

To Mrs. John Bartlett

Paris, *November* 20, 1872.

My dear (Mrs.) Hannah (Bartlett), —

Ask J. B. if this looks like saying My dear Hannah, and if he says it does, I will treat liberally to anything economical. I will give him as many of my cigars as he can smoke in twenty-four hours, and as much of my claret as he can drink in forty-eight. I am in a quiet hotel with J. R. L. and his wife, living nearly the same sedentary life as at home. Indeed, I cannot walk much, having now one of my downs, though I got famously up, in Dresden. Tell your John that I got his letter — that it was very pleasant but very short, and that I expect a long and circumstantial one from him. If he won't take that trouble I shan't think so well of him. When I wrote him I believe I asked no answer, as I have of almost no one — none out of the family; but as he saw fit to write, tell him to write me a long one and give me his account of the fire, which I should like to have.

I will now briefly tell where I have been, and staid. On August 15, finding that James wished to make a tour in England, and a visit to William Storey in Northumberland, I took the steamer for Rotterdam, — thence a through ticket for Dresden, and made out to get there on August 17, without a word of High Dutch but with great anxieties lest I should be switched off into some wild and pagan country.

Tuesday, August 20, I set out for Vienna with the Dorrs, whom I met at Dresden. I had a very pleasant trip, and on Tuesday 27th bade them good-by and about noon set out for Dresden and arrived at about 4 say the next morning. I staid there in entire solitude till October 15, except a few days before I left, in which I had the company of Henry Ware, who had come to spend the winter in Dresden. I fraternized with him but could n't walk much.

On October 15 I set out for Rendsburg in Holstein, to find the old friend with whom I travelled in '39, who I had reason to believe was still living. I found only his nephew (who also had been my companion) older than his uncle of 1839 — and I found that my pleasant friend had been dead since 1845. I was very pleasantly received by the nephew, who was but a young fellow when I travelled with him, and on October 17th set out for Frankfort-on-the-Main, where I arrived at 9 or 10, say, next morning. Staid over the day — refreshed — drew some money — looked at the town, which is extremely pretty, and on Saturday, October 19 went by Mannheim to Dürkheim, a town of Rhenish Bavaria, prettily situated in a country of vineyards. Here I stayed ten days, lonely enough, and on Wednesday October 30 took a through ticket for Paris and arrived there Thursday morning before J. R. L. was up. Here I have been domiciled with him very comfortably ever since, but have been quite sedentary. I can walk but little. R. W. Emerson with his daughter came to the house last Friday, and go on for Egypt tomorrow.

This is a very prosy history of my pilgrimage, which itself has been for the most part prosaic. Tell J. B. that I am loyal to "the Centre." We hear that he has bought a lot to build; let him tell me about it when he writes — tell him he *must* write me a long letter if he writes me any. I don't pretend to tell you about the places I have been at — for when I consider the many people who have been everywhere and almost never open their lips for "Narrative" and are seldom asked to do it, I feel that my scanty impressions had at least better not be committed to paper. I don't know that they would afford much material for small talk. There is one thing I can tell you — that it is mighty dark here in Paris most of the time at this season. I had to stop at 3½ this afternoon. I am getting a number of letters ready for the Brest steamer of the 23d, and find myself a good deal limited by the darkness of the day, and the effort to my eyes of writing at night.

I suppose I shall go to Italy bye and bye, but James Lowell seems quite too contented with his abode here to go yet awhile. I may have to go alone, in which case I shall probably make a short business of it. I shall not probably come home till spring. I have worked at German somewhat and French a very little. This has served to please me with the idea of an occupation. I have been patriotic from the moment I left the wharf. I have n't yet seen a (country) place half as pretty as Cambridge — nothing to compare with Brattle Street, unless possibly in Frankfort, but the grounds there had all the publicity of a considerable city and are hardly to be compared with the domestic reserve of Brattle Street.

Paris is very beautiful in the way of a great city. The river is very straight here and affords a fine vista by day and night — the lights at night are very beautiful. The river as you know is bounded by fine walls on each side, and the space from the walls to the water, which I suppose is covered in freshets, is paved nicely with square stone. There is great plenty of little steamers, darting down stream or pushing gallantly up, and there are here and there rows of trees down on the paved shore, which must be very trural-rural in summer. The Tuileries and Louvre too, situated along the river, present a magnificent front, I won't venture to say how long.

Our hotel here is a charming old place — simple and comfortable and the things excellent — chops, omelettes and I think steaks not to be surpassed. I have a wood fire in a little deep old-fashioned chimney, which returns a small dividend of heat for the wood invested. James Lowell and Mrs. are out this evening or would wish to be remembered to you both. I take the responsibility — and remember them most kindly to you. My eyes begin to ache — I have got to write tomorrow, so, after you have scolded J. B. roundly for sending so short a letter, give my love to him, and then, addressing the "Bartlett pair" I conclude with,

Yours aff.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell desire to be kindly remembered to you both.

TO JOHN BARTLETT

PARIS, *November* 26, 1872.

I sent a letter to Mrs. Bartlett last Thursday, and now write to you in hopes of receiving bye and bye a *long* one in return.

You must have had a prodigious time of it lately, with the fire and the horse disease.[1] We got news of the fire very soon, and shortly after of its limits. It seems almost invidious to be congratulated for escape from a calamity in which so many of your neighbors suffered; nevertheless I will tell you that I am glad you have escaped. I suppose you removed your stock, if that was possible in the want of horse-power. One hardly knows what to say after such an event, more than that he is sorry for all the sufferers. It calls out the manly fortitude of thousands whom words don't avail. The suffering from losses, disappointments in plans, and the weary labor of reconstruction of business and buildings and everything must be terrible. And what a new view this fire gives of the tenure of property. When I heard of the first reports which announced the probable general failure of insurance companies, I felt as if I might give up about the greater part of my property and be prepared to go on to a low diet at any moment. Accounts are better now. I received the *Journal* of the 11th today with a detailed account of the fire, which is far more impressive than the general reports, received before. It must have been a most anxious time with you, and now it is over I should like to have you tell me your experience.

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[1] The Great Fire of Boston occurred November 9–10, 1872. An epidemic of epizoöty, coming at the same time, put the fire-engine horses out of commission.

I hope you are well reinstated now in comfort and peace of mind, otherwise I would n't ask a letter of you. It is very little that I have asked of anybody in that way I can assure you; and don't you write me now if it is a burden, but if you do write a whopper four pages *fine*. It won't take you more than an hour or so. I am conscious that I ought to tell you something in my letter but have precious little. I think I have told my story in my letter to Mrs. B. and have not much more than that, i.e. my journeyings and residences.

Henry Ware, I believe I have said, came to Dresden a little while before I left, but I could n't walk about much with him. I got quite smart at one time in Dresden, but standing in the gallery there, and afterward taking a little too long walk, put me all back again, and since I have been in Paris, which is a month within one day, I have taken but very short walks, and seen but little. In fact I have lived the same sedentary life as I have so much at home. I keep up my loyalty to Old Cambridge, but having come abroad I wish to see Italy, and suppose I shall go there pretty soon. James is very comfortable here and seems in no hurry to depart and it is the same with myself. Do tell me if you don't get up some whist. Also whether you have sat on the piazza this summer as much as ever, and enjoyed it as well; how Carter is — how Choate is (and remember me to him) and all those things that seem so homelike. I am mighty moderate in my potations here; wine and nothing but, — and light wine too, James Lowell the same; and tonight as I sit writing have nothing to look forward to for a snifter — for a *nip* — but the waterbottle—however I won't be too good. I do occasionally get a bottle of wine up into my room,—have once had a bottle of what I think was Port, very good — *not* light wine — and had James Lowell in and had a good session. So much comes out on cross (self) examination.

Well you see that it is by no means a gay life that I lead, away from home, though now a very comfortable one, and so far as domestic life is concerned a very pleasant one except that I am necessarily a great deal alone. J. L. has to go out a good deal and I cannot of course accompany him.

Paris is more beautiful than I remembered it to be and a more solid city than London, if stone is considered more massive than brick.

The river (which I am very near to) runs very straight through the city, affording a fine vista up and down.

It is enclosed all along within solid walls, with fine broad parapets which form the boundary of wide and handsome streets on each side. Then from high-water mark is all handsomely paved with square stone down to low ditto. Looking from my side the Tuileries and Louvre stretch along opposite some fifth of a mile, say, to the left of them a long grove, a part I believe of the garden, then handsome buildings as far as you can see, and in the distance the $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{forest}\\ \text{woods}\end{matrix}\right\}$ of Fontainebleau[1] dimly seen.

Looking up the river, Notre Dame, a grand old building as you know, and solid handsome buildings all along to it. Then here and there down on the sloping shore of the river are lines of trees which rise up in charming contrast to inflexible stone all about. It is 12½ P.M. If you can stand this prosy bit of description you can write me a long letter — see you do. Remember me kindly to Mrs. Bartlett.

Yours aff. J. H.

Have you been Smelting? and if so, how often?

How is the Firm? How is Storer? and remember me to him.

To John Bartlett

20/4 It is too dark to write — barely possible.

Wednesday afternoon,
November 27. 3.5.

It is a rainy day, and already almost too dark to write, but I want to set you an example and so splice my letter.

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[1] He meant St. Cloud.

I have been again looking over the account of the fire. It must have been of the most tremendous kind — I suppose that with a very large number of people it is but a heavy loss and grievous obstruction and delay. To how many it is ruin and a beginning over again, I cannot tell, — perhaps you will give me information about it. I am waiting now to write to Mr. Clark, expecting a letter to which I can reply — if you see him I wish you would ask him to subscribe liberally for me if any collection is made.

I am invited out to a Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow, to a Mons. Logel's who married a Boston lady. I fear I shall not enjoy it so well as my Thanksgiving dinner of last year. I won't write any more description of Paris on this thin paper; it is too heavy. I will only mention the trees all along the street bordering the river. The Seine is very full now and affords employment to the "Standing committee," which I frequently join for a moment on my short expeditions outside.

You ought to hear the wooden shoes, or wooden-soled shoes, when some little boy takes to running in the comparative stillness of evening. It sounds like the correction which his mamma applies to the little boy's foundation, magnified two hundred fold.

Excuse the tedium of this but admire the quantity and imitate it.

J. L. is out and Mrs. L. in her room, but I send both their regards knowing that they will ratify.

To John Bartlett

Paris, *January* 28, 1873.

My dear J. B.,—

My appeal to you was not in vain. It resulted in a capital letter which really gave me a great deal of pleasure. I have only one criticism to offer, which I advance with a feeling of delicacy, not wishing in the least to wound your feelings. If the 6th page had been followed by the 7th, 8th, 9th, and say the 10th, it would have given a sort of equilibrium to the letter highly artistic and gratifying. Five pages of introduction and five of conclusion. You take my idea! You see yourself how complete the thing would have been! However, waiving criticism which is the art of discontent I thank you heartily for the incomplete 6 pages that you sent. I really think that you have a natural turn for letter-writing which you ought to cultivate while you are young. "Youth is the seed-time of life," or "Life is the seed-time of youth," or something of that sort — it runs very prettily either way.

I fear — or rather I hope — that your desolation during the absence of your old friends and fellow clubbists is a little affected. I don't want you to have to become a PHILOSOPHER as I have been forced to do. It is to be sure a highly honorable and mysterious sort of business, but, I tell you, J. B., a hard one — a mighty hard one. I don't wonder though that you should feel a little of that solitude which I have felt so much. I think that J. R. L. occasionally casts longing eyes back on Brattle Street and Elmwood Avenue.

I was interested by your condensed account of the horse disease and the fire, which truly were great phenomena in their way. I think I see a certain individual with his leg of mutton in hand and resolution in his face marching sturdily homeward. I wish he had to do this four times a week at least — or its equivalent — and add so many food-enjoying days to his calendar.

Some of these days I doubt not that individual will gird up his loins and write me a letter, 10 to 12mo, and in such case let him throw in all the personal and local sketches that occur to him in a reflection of not less than half an hour over not more than 14 drops of — I can't recall the name but I think you will know what I mean. Have you "reported at the Centre"? Have you been to the Centre at all? You ought to do it in memory of old times and report to me.

You report the weather mild up to the 17 December. Since about that, you have had according to all accounts rousing weather. I appoint you METEOROLOGIST-GENERAL for the U.S. to report to me personally on this subject in not more than thirty days from this date. By the way, though not specially apropos to the weather, don't let me forget to thank you for your kind offer which Mr. Clark reported to me — but my losses were very small and I have been so much of a PHILOSOPHER in Europe that my finances are very prosperous, but it was well done of you, Old Boy!

Now do you know why I have put in that little expression? I'll tell you — All hands, if they live at all, have got to carry that freezing title, and I thought I would take the first chill off by applying it along with the warm expression of my gratitude.

I am interested in all you say about your house.[1] I don't know but you ought to have formally consulted the CLUB — and have obtained a majority of voices for your project! However, now I think of it the subject *was* up before them at various times and I don't know but you as good as obtained leave to build. If the proceedings should prove in any way insufficient, the remedy will be for you to call a meeting for ratification — and I should advise you as a friend (personal interests apart) to take all possible means on that occasion to conciliate the good opinion of the CLUB in favor of your project. I won't undertake to suggest the means of conciliation — that might seem indelicate, although I am working entirely in your interests.

I presume you have got pretty architectural by this time and don't talk of anything smaller than pediments and entablatures. I don't happen to know much about the science or its terms — but perhaps you will accept one practical hint from me. From all that I have heard about our weather now is the time to put the friezes into the house. Don't fail to write me how you come on with your building. Who's your architect and ditto carpenter? I was always for the site you have chosen. I considered the width of the lot of comparatively small importance, and the length of it, with the ascent of the land, of great importance.

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[1] Mr. Bartlett was building at 165 Brattle Street the house in which he lived during the rest of his life.

When you have a house there the disproportion of length and breadth will I think disappear, which was visible in the open lot. I am very glad that you have fixed on your enterprise, and on that place. Now let me tell you that I received Mrs. Hannah Bartlett's letter last Wednesday, and read it with a great deal of pleasure and gave it "my approbation" as a *very* good, pleasantly written piece of friendship, and I mean to answer it very soon. I relinquished *all ambitious views* at home to take up the hard life of PHILOSOPHER over here, and it is a great consolation to me to be pleasantly remembered by those I left in possession of Home comfort. I had not heard of J. H.'s illness — the poor fellow must have had a hard time of it.

You both have my approbation for getting VACCINATED.

I have not said anything about my residence here — indeed there is very little to say — my movements are so limited. I live so much as when I was at home, that an attempt at talk on that subject would probably be only tedious. It would do well enough to chat about at home.

I have written you a long letter — if it proves a dull one I have done you an irreparable injury. Why? Why because when it is once read you can't un-read it.

When you feel very jolly some time give vent in a letter to me.

Mr. and Mrs. Lowell send their kind regards to you both. The French letter will come I think bye and bye.

With my love to you both.

Yours truly.

To Mrs. John Bartlett

Paris, *February* 26, 1873.

My dear Mrs. Bartlett, —

I have already told J. B. how much I was pleased with your letter but it is no harm to repeat it. Yes, that letter, coming from the First Precinct — yea, I may say from the very "Centre" (For explanation of "Centre" apply to J. B. Esq., Brattle St.) did me good — it enlivened and refreshed all my mental circulation. And when you wound up with those apt quotations from Scripture, it so carried me home, that I felt for the pew door to let myself out. Yea verily, Sister Bartlett, thy letter was as a bundle of sweet herbs to one coming out of the desert and as sweet waters from the brook Kishan.

A letter from home should be just what yours is—your little *résumé* of home incidents is all of it interesting, and I have to thank you for not forgetting Ben Butler, for whom, funny as it may seem, I entertain a most tender regard. I know well that to others he seems nothing but a little wheezing cynic, but to me he is a bunch of most sentimental wool.[1] Of course, I am pleased to be told that I am not forgotten at home — that is a comforting assurance to an "old gent" whose presence abroad did not seem to have been particularly expected by the people of Europe.

Good wishes are never out of season and I return yours — hoping that you may both live in the new house till J. B. grumbles at the repairs that time has made needful; or if this house should not entirely suit you, that you may live to build a dozen more, — within a radius however of not more than a quarter of a mile from the present site, — provided nevertheless that in the direction of the Appian Way, you may go one half mile.

Don't think that I am going to forget Nim. Tell him that I hear his bark of welcome and farewell even here, and hope before long to hear it there, and that I cordially return the kind expressions with which he has favored me.

I should have mightily liked to walk about here or in London or Dresden with you and J. B., but I have not once been in condition to take a leisurely stroll, and the charm is, in that, to take as much time as you please to explore and gaze. The farthest that I have walked was the other day with James Lowell to Notre Dame. Going up stream along the Seine from our house, you come in a short half mile to the Pont Neuf where the "Isle" begins and the bridge bestrides water, land, and water again. At this point the fanciful part of Paris begins for me, the old original Paris — built when an island was desirable as a defensible position. As you stand on the bridge you see the two branches take their separate way, and between them the island rises with buildings older and more irregular than you have passed in coming there, and so grouped, or situated, that they seem to rise toward the centre as if on an eminence, and are something on the picturesque order. In the neighborhood are some of the genuine old streets of real antiquity, some ten feet wide. I feel a difference of about four hundred years after passing beyond Pont Neuf, and consequently become a *very* "old gent." I have been used to think that people talked of the beauty of Paris because they had such gay times there, but now, confining myself to my own neighborhood only, I find a great deal that is charming along the river, with its fine solid walls — its well-paved shores, the trees growing close thereto, and above on the streets bordering, more numerous trees, broad walks, and I will add, not as a beauty, but as a most effective accompaniment of beauty, the frequent seats at regular intervals. I should be ungrateful to omit them for I have proved their value extensively. The Garden of the Tuileries, about as far from us as Gardiner Hubbard's house from you, offers first, a certain show of garden, and then a veritable wood as long as from your house to Elmwood Avenue and four or five hundred feet wide. Cords upon cords of chairs are stacked there to await warm weather, and I saw a regiment of them that had been beautified for the season as I passed the other day, and have felt warmer ever since. The buildings are of a soft pale stone that hardens by ex[posure].

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[1] Benjamin F. Butler, the Massachusetts demagogue, who was then throwing one of his characteristic political somersaults.

As to people, you know that they have in the main the same appearance here as in Boston. The *ouvriers* wear very commonly a short white linen frock — the women who carry vegetables, fish, etc. in handcarts or baskets, go bare-headed (that is wear only caps), and the very young children that you see in doorways, or making short excursions on the sidewalk, wear something equivalent to a tight fitting night-cap — which I presume it is, after 7 o'clock in the evening.

The guests at our hotel are almost entirely French. J. L. understands their conversation and joins in it. Mrs. L. understands it and talks a little. I don't understand it and confine myself to the *expressions* of the countenance, which I make as knowing as I can. There is no dog, no cat in the house, or I should send their international regards to Nim without consulting them. Cats so far as I can judge are quite scarce here and deem it expedient apparently to keep dark. Small dogs are reasonably plenty and present a fair average I should say of intelligence. I saw one little fellow stop and look through the railing of the bridge as something was passing, with such a critical air, that I should n't be surprised if he kept the run of business on the river.

I will trust to your excellent temper not to be irritated with the prosy details of this letter — you wrote me a pleasant and a long letter — I felt bound to write you at least a long one, which I may say this is. I have not been to Italy yet, expect to go soon.

Give my love to J. B.

Very truly,
Your old friend.

To J. R. Lowell

London, *June* 9, 1873.

My dear James, —

I let the first interrupted place of date stand as evidence of my long stay in Paris. It will be a fortnight tomorrow since I set out for Embden at 3 or thereabouts, while you were, I fear, having a dull time of it at Chartres. It was a dull day, at home or abroad. I was in Embden the next evening at about 6, after seeing a good deal of poor country as I neared my place of destination, and any number of black and white cattle. It was cold as Greenland when I entered the Maison Blanche, a hotel of moderate pretentions — which it sustains very well. What with the cold, autumnal evening, the ordinary-looking house — the muddy bed of the canal footing my windows, deserted by the tide — I felt an intense dreariness as I took possession of my chamber and received my water for shaving in a small bowl — but on going down I found a good dinner — after dinner I found a De Ruyter (relative of the famous one). De Ruyter directed me to the British Consul, perhaps [illegible] who received me very pleasantly and convinced me that there was nothing for me to learn in Embden. I came home, and finding jolly De Ruyter (another habitué of this tavern) in company with some of his old cronies, transferred myself to my room — where I made some little experiments on the nature and properties of Schiedam, and passed a placid evening conscious of the good work *I* was doing. The next morning I was off at about 8 for Rotterdam, where I arrived at evening. — Next day secured passage and sailed for London (Friday, May 30) where I arrived on Saturday noon and took up my quarters as near as I could to my old room. On Wednesday evening, June 4, I set forth for Edinbro, where I arrived pretty early next morning — drove about a good part of the day and had a nice time — quite a glorious time for an "old gent." On Friday morning at 10½ o'clock or so set forth again. Stopped at York and tried to find Henry Ware, in vain; I sent the Boots of the Royal Inn twice forth and twice he returned from a bootless search. So at evening I resumed my route and arrived in London at an early morning hour. At about 7 o'clock of this Saturday evening, June 7, I was off again for Oxford — where I arrived by 10 or so — was about the town a good deal, yesterday (Sunday). — Heard a part of a sermon in the forenoon, in the afternoon same, and at 8.30 was off for London again.

When I returned here I found a number of letters in limbo at the B[arings'] — whether because I had omitted "till further notice" or not — no matter. There was one from the Gurneys — in which he, the Dean, speaks of you as "that best of friends" in wishing, as I recollect, to be remembered to you.

So far, I have written with your favorite quill pen — with consequences which you behold. I am quite busy with the little matters that have to be done before I go to Liverpool.

. . . (What seems such a blot above, is you see a plan of Edinburgh drawn up for you — I don't think I should have made it without a quill pen.) Remember me kindly to my old instructress and fellow pupil, who I trust is fully enjoying the summer (I came near calling it spring — it does n't feel summery here yet).

I look back pleasantly on my old abode in Rue de

Beaune, with its various portraits among which Battiste is prominent,—moving solemnly about, — I may say stalking, to the performance of his daily tasks. Remember me pleasantly to the household. Also convey my regards to the Marquis — our friendship is a sentimental one founded on friendly glances across the table — and rather injured than advanced by any talk we may have had—so waft him from me a pleasant sentimental recollection of him with his friendly smile on. . . .

Well, go thy way James, use tobacco and other aids to conduct, freely and I shall hope to see thee one of these days with a handle to thy name. And am

Thine truly.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *July* 29, 1873.

My dear James, —

You have no doubt expected to hear from me before this, and would that I had been in writing mood; but I have been a good way from it. I sailed as perhaps you know on the 12th of June. I was full of the hope of indulging my home sentimentalism to the top of my bent. I meant to perambulate the old familiar places and indulge myself in sober revery, but when I arrived, my leg bothered me somewhat more than it had and I was forced to keep pretty quiet, indeed have not yet quitted that regimen, though better. Meanwhile the sentimental aroma evaporated. I tired myself with small pursuits in my hot room and finally fell into a rather melancholy mood from which I hope I am now emerging. I can walk better now, as I have once before said.

So much for the psychological and physical — now for that which doth peculiarly belong to the experienced traveller — the incidental. Well in the first place; while you were inspecting the Cathedral of Chartres under an umbrella, I was by 3 o'clock on my way to Embden. I found it a long ride, lasting till 6 or 7 the next evening. I found mighty little in the way of family information,[1] but I met at the tavern a worthy and jolly collateral descendant of De Ruyter, himself of that name. We conversed fluently in elegant French. I tried the Schiedam of the locality and found it good. I went to bed a cheerful man, though quite dreary when I first arrived. The next day I posted off (via R.R.) for Rotterdam, engaged passage the next day and departed at noon, entirely satisfied with the duration of my stay at Rotterdam. The next day, at noon or thereabouts, I was reinstated at the Tavistock. I asked for my old room and got the next but one to it, and afterward got my old room back. It was odd that my mostly dreary residence there last year afforded a basis for quite a home feeling at this time. June 5 I went to Edinboro.

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[1] According to tradition, some of Holmes's Dutch ancestors lived in Embden.

Stopped at York in returning; made a very pleasant trip of it. Saturday, 7th, I ran down to Oxford at evening and came back the next evening. By taking proper precautions I escaped having a degree conferred on me.

Henry Ware and wife and sisters came home in the Siberia. We had a nasty cold roughish, foggish passage, with a very good, civilized, not numerous company. We arrived on Tuesday 24 toward evening, and I found Mr. Clark on hand with a coach which soon restored me to my old residence in the Appian Way. I found that the spring had been cold and excessively dry; the grass looked dolefully.

I found all friends well. I have seen the Gurneys but once, very soon after arrival — they were in excellent condition and seemed pleased to see me home. Gurney was overworked a little, you know, at one time, and unwell. J. B. welcomed me cordially to his piazza, which I have frequented of evenings since. He goes into his new house in August. He says he was very solitary after we went — he is in very good condition now, quite rotund.

Now I expect you in return for this small letter to give me wealth of talk about yourself and Mrs. Lowell, what you have done and what you are doing.

I saw an account of your dignification at Oxford and that there was enthusiasm.[1] Do let me have a fuller account. If you are still at the Hotel de France et de Lorraine, do bring your domestic history there up to this point, and if not, to the time at which you left. Commend me most particularly to my comrade and fellow pupil in the path of knowledge, Mrs. Fanny Lowell, and if our venerable teacher should be in your neighborhood remember me respectfully to a hard man, but a just and a thorough one. Remember me to our friend the Marquis — and lastly if you let the household know that you have heard from me — let them know that I remember them well.

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[1] Oxford University conferred on Lowell the degree of D.C.L. in 1873.

I am in at the Doctor's frequently; at Carter's, Underwood's, H. Ware's infrequently. The latter has recovered, and as is common after fever, has grown very fat for him, so that he has the appearance of playing a part — so different is he from his former self. Carter goes on fattening and to fatten — he must never travel in the South Pacific certainly — they might make a *pâté de "boy" gras* of him.

Since Christmas we have had a rousing winter — first we had on that day snow changing to rain, which left a thin, icy floor that was fair sleighing. Since that one heavy snowstorm and two or three lesser ones — we have had cold weather too with our sleighing almost all the time — today it thaws a little. If you are as well when you receive this as I hope you will be, please tell me what your weather is.

Our club goes on with regularity, excepting always the Doctor's interruptions, which continue as formerly. He does not seem to grow feeble upon them in the least that I see.

I go over to old Mrs. Howe's occasionally and take a hand at whist, where we play an easy good-natured sort of game that does not put my skill to the test.

I look back with great delight to your clubs — when we all foregathered before your bright sea-coal fire and each one saw three other such contented, nay hilarious men, for I think an observer could detect under the Don's gravity the twinkling of the inward eye.

Well, I hope we shall see such pleasant times again and that we may, my dear man, I hope you will resume all your vigor and expel all your pains and that we others shall be able (unless one should be prevented by corpulency) to receive you with that delight which your return will certainly give us all. I send you my love, regard, esteem, any or all that you may want. I gave Charles Storey your remembrances and I send you his — pledging my word that he will most cordially ratify when he sees me. "Omnis ratihabitio retrotralatur et priori mandato æquiparatur." I see Mabel often and she appears to be in excellent condition. She and Sam and Clara figure in the sled line now.

CHAPTER V

THE MELLOW YEARS

After coming home John Holmes fell comfortably back into the routine which he enjoyed more than foreign travel. Home for him meant not merely the simplest rooms in which he lodged at No. 5 Appian Way, or the little wooden house itself, with its typical inverted-V-shaped roof and small piazza, but also the collections of cats which his landlady, Miss Tolman, maintained and in each of which he took the characteristic interest.

"Why don't you have better quarters, John?" an old contemporary asked him one day.

"I shan't have better quarters till I have a better half," Holmes replied.

The crony found the quick repartee so witty that he sent it to *Punch* and *Punch* paid him lavishly for it; but he never shared the check with the author of the joke. Holmes was not a money-maker.

John Holmes never had a better half. In his young days he became engaged, but his *fiancée* died of consumption before they were married.

Readers unacquainted with Cambridge will perhaps care to know that the little street which some wag dubbed Appian Way — a name adopted by the town authorities — is hardly more than two hundred yards long and connects Garden Street with Brattle Street. In John Holmes's time it was flanked by wooden houses, comparatively recent, and plain even to ugliness. The one old house which abutted on it had a pleasant association for those persons who remembered that Arthur Hugh Clough lived in it during his visit to Cambridge in 1852.

From his front windows John Holmes could watch the passengers and vehicles on Brattle Street, only a few steps away, and we may assume that he knew well, by sight at least, the troops of little children who frequented the candy and fruit store at the corner. Whether Appian Way was given its name by some youngster who imagined that only academic fossils inhabited it, or by some one who saw the irony in comparing this inconspicuous lane with the famous highway of Imperial Rome, I know not. Its eastern end faced the Cambridge Common, where Holmes passed many hours strolling along the paths or meditating on the benches. A stone's throw to the left spread the Washington Elm, still vigorous enough in his time to throw a little shadow on Fay House, the home of Radcliffe College. To the right was Christ Church and the ancient burying-ground, and the mock Gothic steeple of the Unitarian Church. Across the way rose the oldest Harvard buildings, whose brick walls were mantled with Japanese ivy which glowed with richest red toward sunset on autumn afternoons.

NO. 5 APPIAN WAY IN 1917

Northward, half hidden by its exuberant lilac-bushes, lay the quaint residence in which the great Dr. Waterhouse, equally irascible and talented, dwelt for more than half a century. Hither Holmes went often, to call upon two very good friends of his, the doctor's granddaughters, Louisa L. and Mary H. Ware. They used to sing together at the piano. They had an annual Latin dinner at which they always spoke in that language; a feast at which they consumed a quart of oysters and drank a pint bottle of champagne which John Holmes brought in his pocket. Once, when the sisters had the grippe, he came to read to them, choosing as a work that would cheer them up De Foe's "History of the Plague in London."

To J. R. Lowell

August 1, 1873.

My dear James, —

I think I can fill this supplementary half sheet, though material is not plenty. I have knocked about a little lately — went to Nahant yesterday to see Wendell, went to our friend Mr. Dorr's place at Canton on Saturday and staid till Monday.

I am going to morrow morning to Dr. Ware's at Rindge, with Waldo Higginson, to stay a few days. Not walking much, I have not been up by your place yet. We have had a pretty fair supply of rain since I returned, and the country regains its looks. But such heat! It is perfectly sweltering, smelting heat, and with the dog-day characteristics now superadded it is — language fails me — but if you can find a horrid word enough in Old French, do supply the gap.

The burnt area in Boston is being rapidly filled up. I went for the first time yesterday inside the circle and got some notion of the visible limits of the fire. The later fire of July 4 would have been considered a very great one but for its overwhelming brother of November. Do write me all about yourself and Mrs. Lowell.

At this moment I cannot conjecture where you are but I will guess Rue de Beaune, whither you have probably gravitated back from England.

I want to go up by your house and see how lonely it seems without you. As I came up (per Steamer Meta) yesterday, from Nahant, I saw a large fire at E. Boston, which you will have seen chronicled before you get this.

I am told that Mr. Emerson had a reception at the Station in Concord and that he enquired of his daughter what was the meaning of all those people being there.[1]

I deposited 20 pounds to your credit with Mr. Wellman the other day. I told him that it was a debt you had been in no hurry about.

Remember me to Mrs. L.

Yours.

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[1] Mr. Emerson, whose memory had failed, returned to Concord in May from a foreign tour.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *March* 18, 1874.

Yours of December 24 in reply to mine of August (I having landed in June) and now mine of March 18 in reply to yours of December 24. "All this I say," to use the style of Bishop Butler, indicates a couple of centenarians. And yet "by ginger" (Lowell) we are not that yet, no Sir (ree) (Occidentalism). For my part give me a good fire, a clean hearth and the utmost leniency of the game, and I am as good, *pro hac vice* (Latin Author), as any juvenile, and I will take upon me to say at least as much for you. For the intervals between such spaces of serious employment they may go heavier with me than once, but when past they seem to have escaped nimbly enough. Your reflections on the lapse of time have started mine. Let me ease your mind about my hair. By dint of having small quantities clipped for a good while, I have accumulated a monstrous amount; — it is erratic and tempestuous and gives me much trouble. I would gladly contract to thatch half a dozen baldheads if they would pay the barber's bill, which I assure you would be something serious.

You speak of hot punch — I should have got a good deal more of it if I had n't foolishly asked in a friend of well-known bibulous power. I wish I *could* have been in Venice with you. We would have fought the prose elements before which I succumbed — the Boston east wind, the hotel life, etc.

My thanks to you both for recollecting me occasionally and to you for vicarious charity. I revel in the idea of it — it makes me enthusiastically benevolent. I am glad to hear you say that you want so much to come home. I like the sentiment. Come on.

Why did n't you tell me a word about Oxford and the degree? but I know you did n't wish to appear "sot up" (Lowell).

I think I should feel more at home if you would come, especially if you would cease to read forever the old French. I hope you have pretty well read out, over there.

You are good man *desipere in loco* when you set out. You have no half way there, but of late years you have not set out enough.

My knee (in answer to your hope-expressed) is better, and I am hoping to walk again comfortably. I have given your love to the Club.

There have been no great changes here. Old Mr. Buttrick has died. Mr. Foster has been ill of pneumonia and recovered. He is 90 years old. Charles Elliot (married Mary White) has been down with the same disease for about six weeks; has just now somewhat recovered his strength.

I went the other day, Monday 9th, to the wedding of Elizabeth Sparks — married to Edward Pickering. As I was coming away I encountered

Anna Buttrick and had some little talk with her, the first for a long time. She left J. B.'s perhaps before we went abroad. She has lately taken charge of affairs for Mr. Cushman, and seems to be very well situated.

J. B. is now an old settler in his new house.

I have not seen the Gurneys much this winter on account of distance, but have kept pleasantly along with them. The same with the Nortons. I have seen them but once; I hope to see them this evening and to hear from you through them, which I have been promised. I hear at this moment the old tinkle of the college bell. I hope that after such a surfeit of abroad, that will have a charm for you.

I have not alluded to your particular loss, here, Mrs. Anna Lowell. I felt very sorry that I had not seen her since I came home.

I went in to Mary Howe's on Monday to see Charles Sumner's funeral procession. It was immensely long and there were a great many people collected along the route. I saw the Doctor last evening; he could n't speak with any confidence of his probable successor.[1]

Thursday 19th.

I took a coach (Lowell) last evening and went to Charles Norton's, sat a little in his room with him and talked of you; *inter alia*—found that you were in Rome. Why did n't you—but I find that I have asked the question about Oxford once. You won't be right till your foot is on your "native heather."

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[1] George F. Boutwell succeeded Sumner as Senator.

Let him return to his native heather. Anon. If I could only have sauntered at leisure, I should tickle your homesickness to purpose with sentimental sketches of Cambridge haunts, from Simon's Hill to Kidder's Swamp.

They have cut down the elms near the Tremont House (Boston). The whole community was Paddock or Anti-Paddock for some time. You hear little bursts of declamation occasionally now, but the gist of the matter is gone. Everybody (almost) bends to the sweep of an idea going at hurricane rate in our country, but it makes a good deal of hypocrisy. I believe there are hosts of pretended tree-lovers who hate a tree in their hearts.

I don't doubt that, however often under the weather, you enjoy Mrs. Lowell's enjoyment like a good husband and good man. Don't fail to remember her fellow pupil kindly to her. We are having to day, as we have had ever so much this winter, warm (and of course muddy) weather. I have my window open to balance a small fire. If I have omitted to tell you about any thing in particular, write instantly and I will correct it in my next.

With love to both of you and hopes of speedy return.

I am not sure of your Oxford title, which I suppose I ought to put on my letter. So you must be content with the universal Squire.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *May* 8, 1874.

MY DEAR JAMES AND MRS. LOWELL, —

I want to write a short letter to serve as a sort of preface to your return. And the first thing to do is to welcome you heartily in advance. I doubt not that Doctor Lowell will feel a hearty glow of oppidanism as he treads Brattle Street again, and Mrs. Lowell all that can be expected from a transplanted citizeness. Cambridge was once a fortified town.

Not a hand has been raised at whist since you have been away. No attempt has been made to reconstitute the club beyond some overtures made by J. B. to Storer, who was preoccupied with another club.

Spring has been coming along with her or his usual grim front

> "With fear of colds
> Perplexing patients."

But you and I (addressing James) are "to the manor born." A good strong wind at northeast is to us pansies and violets. We don't mind if the blue of the latter flower resides somewhere else; it is spring, lawful spring, recognized by the Almanac and fixed by Revised Statutes. They can have cold winds abroad as found at Venice.

You never cared much for village news and there is precious little of it. We have a new minister, son of Mr. Peabody of King's Chapel — seems to be a very nice man, sensible, even, and not too conscious of himself.[1]

I have told you I suppose how J. B. is in his new house, mighty handsome. Hannah joyous as ever, driving with the span, hither and thither, and trotting her friends, sound and invalid, about.

All that I have heard say that you have sent us a noble poem, and I agree with them.[2]

I have always felt sorry that we did not visit the young barrister (I forget the name) that day we went to the Foundling; it was my lameness hindered, I think.

I wish you would remember me, if you have a chance, to my old acquaintance and friends at "Hotel de France et de Lorraine," the Marquis, Monsieur and Madame, Mademoiselle of the Bureau Clarisse, etc. If you should have to make a call on Dr. Burridge, kind regards to him.

If it were made a condition of your prompt return, that I should deliver an Oration, I would do it, tickets deliverable only to citizens and 'esses of Cambridge origin and not less than fifty years old. I should have to read it.

Honorable Man! Why have you wandered so far from your native shores? Was it to explore the realms of modern science? Or was it to disport in the gaieties of a foreign world? etc., etc. No! thou wentest that the longing sages of the old world might enjoy thy converse, and wreathe the laurel, etc., etc.

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[1] Rev. Francis G. Peabody, Harvard A.B. 1869, remained as pastor of the First Parish Church, Cambridge, until 1880.

[2] This probably refers to Lowell's poem on Agassiz, printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1874.

Danforth would applaud handsomely. He has very much lost his mind and is no longer a judge of style.

I trust I sent you in my last most hearty love and remembrance from the Gurneys. If I did not it goes with this.

Henry Ware went to Egypt with a rich invalid last fall and is expected home very soon.

I dote on the view of and across our old Charles as I go up our Brattle Street.

Mr. Longfellow's *jugera* in front of his house are a blessing to sentimental wayfarers.

I am no letter-writer. Come home and we will chat pleasantly and amiably, under the Greenwood tree, by the fire, or along the way. You know you will be most heartily welcomed back. Come on.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *June* 15, 1876.

In a far-off country and in the very central vortex of our politics, I hope you will be pleased to have a word from a Constituent.

I have been for a day or two living between Salem and Cambridge in a manner that somewhat affects my identity—that is—whether J. H. of C.

or J. H. of S., has become a question. But I write to you in the name of J. H. of C., one of your *Constituents*.

I went to Andover yesterday to help marry a young friend, and having put my very best work into it, am somewhat exhausted. Very few people understand the duties and responsibilities of one who is called as witness to the solemn service of matrimony. As you are very busy, I shall not enlarge on this farther than to say, that in the highest view of this function, one is bound to furnish the proper attention, sympathy (and therefore emotion) at every stage of the process. If it is in his power to secure an end of the matrimonial cable? ligament? and he can get any purchase, it is his duty to haul with all his might and make the knot hard and fast. I shall say no more except that few understand this matter, and that from long observation and practice I think I do, and to say that I am much exhausted by my efforts is enough.

I sat in G. B.'s porch last evening, and he reported the Convention to me. I know that you will do rightly, because you will be sure to do what you think right. Don't give the Democrats any chance to come in, for that way in my opinion sadness and badness lie; but for all else I doubt not you will give the Convention a good dose of outspokenness and manliness according to your opportunity. It makes quite an epoch to get a man of your stamp into such a convocation.

So my dear James, keep thy head cool, thy feet warm. . . .

If thou choosest to return incog. (as it were), do so; but say the word and the Club shall meet thee with trump and banner in full force.

We all wish thee back and are Thine, affectionately J. H.

(and five hundred others)

This last letter refers to the fact that Lowell went as a delegate to the Republican Convention at Cincinnati. He went as a Reformer, in the hope of nominating Mr. Bristow; but Gov. R. B. Hayes was the nominee, and after his disputed election, Hayes, among many other admirable appointments, made Lowell American Minister to Spain. Lowell quitted Cambridge for his post in July, 1877. Holmes rejoiced in the honor bestowed upon his friend, but he felt his absence more and more.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *August* 21, 1877.

I received your very delightful letter yesterday at 5.11, as recorded on the back of the same. I enjoyed it to the last line. It is, as the country boys who lived with us used to say, a master good letter. The restoration of the old picture of our hotel life in the persons of Mons. Garrier and Madame and the rest, Clarisse excepted, is charming. I am glad that there is so much conservation left in this world of change. The idea of Josef's admiring gaze at Mons: Garrier is your own. I witnessed the face but took no note of the expression and coloring. It is a delightful idea — the knight and his squire attenuated to this point. Josef sharpens and presents the weapon, and admires Garrier's delicate dissection with the same enthusiasm that one of the old school expended on a chine-cleaving blow; and if I recollect rightly Garrier economically blows the trumpet in defiance and conquest for himself after a triumphant pinch — but I won't be sure. Then our stout little woman in the Kiosk: I am pleased to know that she survives Pierrot whom I had not heard of. Good little woman with her fancies of *chèvres*, *moutons* and the rest, may she have some oriental piece of luck corresponding to her habitation that will give her her goats without a *butt* or an *if*, and all the rest the same.

I won't recapitulate your letter to you any more except to sympathize for the horrid night you must have spent in Garrier's shirt with your baggage in abeyance. I can imagine the dreams you had after the boiled beef, how you grappled with Garrier who came to demand his garment saying that the Commune had risen and he was going to fly with all his effects — how you met the faithless courier and harikarid him in the street — were tried to your great surprise before Judge Ladd, and still more to your astonishment, when you had arrived in due course of law at the guillotine, found J. B.

Dana to be the executioner, who demanded 50 cents as your acknowledgment of the deed he was going to do.

Don't forget to tell me at your convenience, whether you did not rather enjoy the amicable bustification at your departure. I think on the whole "you'd ought ter," to use a familiar dialect.

Well, now we have heard that you have made your appearance before the King and made him a speech which I warrant you was a good one.

I have n't said a word about your departure from Boston. I did n't know when the vessel was to sail, but I went over to E. Boston and found she had gone. I found by the paper that you had an abundant attendance of literary friends — and I rather think you found the hullaballoo agreeable enough. I am glad that I did n't go with them and also glad that I made the pilgrimage to the wharf — or rather near to it; for a man told me the steamer had gone.

You know you disliked the idea of the row they were going to make, but I should think that with the provision made against speeches, you might have quite enjoyed it. A little honorary powder, too, is n't a bad thing. Thence our expression of a man's making some noise in the world.

Cambridge is in a primæval condition, 'bating the forest and some other particulars. Perhaps I ought to say the solitude is primæval. The fruit men give the principal signs of vitality. Peaches, is the great cry at present, three quaats for a quaater. I have been to Princeton (a week), Charles Ware's ten days; with C. W. Storey, at his son's house in Brookline, 2 days. I have been pretty low down in the forties, to speak figuratively and have had maybe a foretaste of weariness of life some of the time. But what's the use of being a philosopher unless you have material to philosophize upon? Notwithstanding this melancholy statement, I went last Wednesday to a clambake near Providence with J. B. and laid on like a Cossack, as J. B. did also. We had thought of going to Newport but it rained and we came home.

I have been just now looking at some of the colonial squabbles in Dudley's time. I find under 1690, "the Malignant party, the Torys in Boston, Charlestown," etc. Under 1707, a Tory defender of Dudley quotes from a Whig assailant the following: "We shall not recriminate here the mismanagement of the then Governour Sir Edmond Andross, since that gentleman is now in a future state." He appreciates the statement and prints NOW large.

You went away I think before President Eliot's engagement came out? No, I think not. It quite recalled the primitive Cambridge to have an item circulate so universally and so briskly.

You tapped the spring of Sibley's gratitude when you commemorated his generosity, at the Commencement dinner. I have always hoped he would get his allowance of sugar, and this is the first time to my knowledge. If so it was high time. He had set the hymn[1] so many years, with but a bare instant of solo before he was drowned in the brazen roar — he had listened so many years to those thanatophorous, thanatethical reports which they used to take foranafter dinner diversion and never had heard "Our popular præcentor John Langdon Sibley," or "Our indefatigable antiquarian J. L. S.," causing his very "πςαπιδ(εςςι)" which I shall translate gizzard, to leap within him. What a soft flood of delight poured over him as his ears almost against belief reported to him your delicate but ample compliment, and the friendly *mugitus* and *strepitus* that followed gave public and far-reaching sanction to your words. I think he will never forget it nor his gratitude.

I have given J. B. your remembrances and shall do the same by Choate.[2] He is *commorant* at Beverly just now. Sears is there with his yacht, and I hope they are having fine times.

Carter is *in statu quo* — I don't see him much. Susan reports having enjoyed your society several days. She is staying at her father's just now.

We have had a great deal of dogday weather, very pronounced — warm, sticky, mighty unpleasant.

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[1] John L. Sibley, the College Librarian, for many years, always led the singing of Psalm 78 at the Harvard College Commencement Dinner.

[2] Charles F. Choate, Harvard A.B. 1849; President of the Old Colony R.R. Co.; a near neighbor of Bartlett's on Brattle Street.

I may come out to Europe bye and bye, don't know. When you find leisure to write me again please tell me that Mrs. Lowell is all right again, which I infer now. Give my particular kind regards to her and tell her she must learn to talk Spanish like a native — that would be a fine trophy for her to bring home. I shall try to find your address as Minister — settled minister. I wish you would send it to me.

It is evening, the crickets are rosining their bows — will begin directly.

The succory is in force — what a beautiful blue it is! I hope that you are going to find Spain very pleasant.

TO PROFESSOR JAMES B. THAYER[1]

January 29, 1878.

MY DEAR MR. THAYER, —

I think I have read enough of the Letters of Chauncey Wright,[2] to write you a rational letter of thanks, but though rational it must be profoundly unintellectual.

I told you how I sat up with C. W. (in the old house) till my illumination was exhausted, and we sat in darkness — how he early developed a purpose of descending into the metaphysical abyss and how he disappeared as down a well, while I sat on the brink and listened to his still receding voice. Where he left me then, *qua* metaphysics, I find myself now. I know little about them; I only have a feeling sometimes when a man goes into very subtle disquisition, as if he were trying to lift himself by his waistband — as if he were chasing some idea that would not quite be caught and became obscured by the multitude of elaborate and circuitous terms used to entrap it. Of course my estimate of C. W.'s philosophical talent is formed on the report of competent observers.

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[1] James B. Thayer (1831–1902), Harvard A.B. 1852, Professor of Law, Harvard Law School.

[2] Chauncey Wright, Harvard A.B. 1852, died in 1875; an ingenious metaphysician, whose Memoir was written by J. B. Thayer.

I thought I saw in his mathematical talent, and his juggling skill, and accuracy, a brain calculated to deal with any subtleties, — ergo, with metaphysics.

I think that you have handled the whole matter of constructing the book admirably, and can well believe that it gave you a great deal of labor.

With many thanks

Yours,

JOHN HOLMES.

To J. R. LOWELL

CAMBRIDGE, *March* 6, 1878.

It is not any scruple on the "order of our going," *i.e.* on the sequence of letter and answer, that has kept me from writing to you so long. I received yours of August 5 and sent an answer which I hope you received. At about the end of October I had an extraordinary access of lameness, without any sufficient cause that I could see, and began to conclude that the old knee had finally broken down, — but after some two months or more I began to mend, to my most agreeable surprise, and am now in *statu quo* or better, but I was for a considerable time in a state of mild despair, getting only short allowance of exercise, and my mind was little better than a law blank — a series of dry clauses with gaps between.

Now that I am better I shall be pleased enough to write you anything that will pleasantly stir up the embers of your Cambridge patriotism. But I can no longer write as the expert whist-player, and convivialist, the bon comarado of a parcel of youngsters — the philosopher who emerges for whist — the whist-player who immures himself for philosophy. But I declare, James, now that I've that venerable title — Φιλοςοφος, on paper, I blush to think of appropriating it in such familiar style.

Well, of myself, it's precious little that I have to tell you. I have staid in mostly during the day and made my calls in the evening. I dined on Thanksgiving day with J. B. and on Christmas with O. W. H., Jr. at his lodgings, where he managed to entertain at the same time two Englishmen — a tutor and his youngster — both young men who were going to travel *via* Mexico and Panama to California, and come back *via* Union Pacific R.R. this summer. I made myself as jolly as I possibly could seeing that the Englishmen had a something wooden about them — in their capacity of strangers. They seem to me in looking back like men who had been badly enchanted and were gradually recovering the use of their limbs and faculties — and I was actually reminded — though it seems very classical for me — of the *ειδωλον αμαμξον*, which was sent to give words of cheer to Penelope. It seems to me a great mistake for strangers to approach transient friendly intercourse in that way. It seems to me that under the safeguard of conventionality, they ought to be free and easy and cordial at first, cooling off as they find occasion. This was called a lunch but I took the liberty to make a comfortable dinner of it, and departed for Cambridge in a state of easy contentment and charity with all mankind.

I went to the marriage of Choate's daughter[1] in September which I doubt not has been fully described to Mrs. Lowell, if not to you.

The garniture of flowers was on a great scale, and the effect I thought very pretty. It was at the Memorial Chapel (as you know I suppose).

Choate is now President of the Old Colony R.R. and we may presume relieved of his hard work at the law.

. . . Early in January I went to Mr. William Read's golden wedding, and enjoyed it a good deal although I had not gained much on my lameness then. It had a neighborhood effect about it which is rare I think in Camb. Old friends and immediate neighbors were asked — and in the supper room, aided by moderate draughts of the rosy, I found something resembling old Cantabrigity.

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[1] To J. Montgomery Sears.

Carter came on, I think it was at Christmas time — it was thought, to stay the winter, but Susan took him home say some six weeks ago. He stayed with Mrs. Lamb, who has taken the house next E. Longfellow's — Lowell Carter lives there. Carter was in about the same condition as before.

Henry Ware, I am sorry to say, is ousted from the Public Library in Boston, to stay however till May, by which time I hope his removal will have been reconsidered.

Mr. Charles Vaughan died about a month since — suddenly, after shovelling snow — a very good man.

I have scarcely seen Choate at all since his daughter's wedding. I omitted to mention M. H.'s marriage to Curtis,[1] son of the Judge, which took place in October at the Orthodox Church, Bishop Huntington assisting Mr. McKenzie — a very nice wedding, of which Mrs. L. has probably heard from the H.'s. . . .

J. B. finds the Van Brunts[2] exceedingly agreeable neighbors, and is quite intimate with them.

Richard Dana, 3d, was married to Miss Edith Longfellow a month or so ago at Appleton Chapel — a great company and a heavy rainstorm.

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[1] B. R. Curtis, Jr., Harvard A.B. 1875.

[2] Henry Van Brunt, Harvard A.B. 1854, architect, had recently built a residence next to John Bartlett's.

I have been comparatively little to J. B.'s since you left. I am very glad that he has Van Brunt so near him. He bought some 4000 (I think) feet of land of the Wellses, — the old fence is taken down, and he can go by the garden walk to the V. B.'s when he pleases.

I called a few minutes last evening at my neighbor, Elliott's, who is himself at the West. She felt quite sad over a fact that I have not yet mentioned. The Doctor has failed. . . . I am glad to say that the Doctor is said to be more cheerful now than he has been under the load which he carried.

I don't know the particulars of the case but am led to suppose that the coal-mine has been the principal weight. I have seen the Doctor since — he is quiet and manly about it as we should expect. I will write you again if there is anything you would wish to hear.

Meanwhile, with kindest regards to Mrs. Lowell,
Yours affectionately.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *June* 14, 1878.

I know well that I ought to have written you long since, — on receipt of yours, — a local, patriotic letter, savory with Cambridge allusions and incident. Alas that I should have been such a dumb waiter.

But I am delocalised and demoralised by the desertion of my friends, who have all gone ministers to Spain, or one thing or other, and left me a withered trunk to dry in my native sand. J. B. is the only one remaining who has the Cambridge smack to him which he has acquired by long and faithful residence. Henry Ware hath some pretensions, but too young, too young, a mere boy. I am sure you agree with me.

Then there's Choate, who has inward appreciations, and good Cantabrigian instincts, but is taciturn, and as yet of tender years. What you and I want is *ripe, local* men of liberal tendencies and virtuous habits, with just enough relish for other people's sins to give a flavor to their own virtue. Above all things we demand men of entirely settled habits, even extending to narrative — nor would we ask liberality on this score. A Charles XII iron-headedness on this point is a part of the programme. Some little badge of identity such as wearing the hat far back on the head, *aut al.*, is not objectionable. I think also that we approve of one who is content to ambulate mostly in a circle of a mile radius, the hearth-stone of course being the centre. A group of such men entirely at leisure, but each with some imaginary task (perennial) to tone down the brilliancy of life's holiday, could *desipere* to purpose. But alas there is some element always wanting — even at a picnic people forget something, and we cannot find the general allotment of leisure, needed for our proposed perpetual vacation.

But this is a strange fancy picture to present to a man hard at work in an honorable function. You and I are I suppose, two of the most industrious men now extant — you in *esse* and I in *posse* and not all *posse* either. Now don't go and say 'possum — your conscience won't let you do it.

But I must begin and talk Cambridge. There's the rub. I can tell you but little except about my own superquiet life, but that, though, will bring in what I have to tell about J. B. and the rest of our friends.

Last summer I went to Dr. Ware's at Rindge as usual — to a clam bake on Narragansett Bay with J. B. — to Mattapoisett a week or so, at O. W. H. Jr.'s. This winter I have not been to anything, to plays, etc., in Cambridge nor to the theatre in Boston. Some time before January, they got up some lectures at the vestry to raise a small fund, and Mr. Peabody asked me to give one of them. I told him I could only venture on Cambridge reminiscences. To give such a topic any sort of chance, for an audience mostly of very recent people, I made it out that a boy who had attended at the old meetinghouse till 1821 was shipwrecked in that year on his first venture to sea, being cast on one of the most remote islands possible to conceive of and that he was but very lately rescued by a venerable navigator, a contemporary, who like himself had attended at the old meetin'us, and had kept up an intercalary connection with Cambridge to this day, by residing here when on shore. I made the two recumbent under a cocoanut tree — and Captain Crojick, finding that his friend (who of course in such solitude had remained pretty much a boy of fourteen) expected to find the Old Cambridge and people of 1821, put him through a course of questioning as to his recollections, which developed the matter I was upon satisfactorily, and with some little episodical ornaments which helped along. The jetsam quondam Cambridge boy also gave a brief Robinson Crusoe narrative of his own. This went off quite pleasantly. John Hopkinson read it for me, I not venturing the experiment.

So far so good, but early in the spring, Satan, waiting outside the Old South, intercepted some of the Committee and suggested to them to ask me to deliver an O. South lecture. Hence came to me discomfiture and woe. I thought to talk a little about the Puritans, as a subject I had some little familiarity with. After a skimble-skamble exordium not specially apropos to anything which Howells thought good enough, I tried the didactic — to foreshorten history down to a neat forty-five-minute perspective; but I found myself so wofully dull that, after destroying material enough for a stunning (in the homicidal sense) history of it, England, I found myself on the eve of the eventful day with a beggarly fragment — which I got Underwood to read. And so my farthing candle was extinguished. What difference between dis-

and ex-tinguished. I could n't get off, because I had been announced.

Since that event my views with regard to the preservation of the Old South have undergone a material change.

And all those who have lectured successfully for O. S. seem to me now painfully compromised by the inherent absurdity of the enterprise.

J. B. ambulates pleasantly along the asphalt sidewalk of life, going down to the Cape now and then, and returning to tell how narrowly he has escaped acute rheumatism from the truculent winds in that quarter.

I sometimes — but very rarely — go up and take a *νιπ* with him, you know what a *νιπ* is? it is water, a little demoralized or, as some heretics have it, it is usquebaugh vitiated by water.

I go at long intervals to see Choate, who is now President of the Old Colony R.R. I wonder I did n't write it Old South R.R.

Carter came on on the 1st June to live at Mrs. Lamb's (next E. Longfellow's). He seems much as he was before.

I walked this morning down Hilliard Street and to the causeway where you get the Brighton-Brookline view. It was mighty pretty. I should have liked to have you for a co-looker — an old friend helps you to sweep away the sense of change that pervades everything.

I wonder whether Mrs. Lowell examines the world from her window as she did in Paris. It was a very sensible idea to systematize her surveys and report home. I warrant she got many a nice picture.

You must give my kindest regards to her and tell her that I don't know how better to show my good will than by solemnly enjoining her to look out sharp against rheumatism, which I trust no longer affects her. And James, when you get to be eighty-four, I hope you will decline to stand on public occasions with your hat off as Mr. Bryant did.[1] . . .

In the *Journal* this morning I found a letter from "Holyoke," no, from South Hadley, beginning thus: —

"Our honored poet Lowell must have caught the inspiration of his 'Vision,' found in all young ladies' albums, from some such scene," etc., etc.

I also enclose a piece from the *Journal* touching "Minister Lowell." How many good old ladies of your father's parish seeing that heading exclaimed, "There! he's settled! I always said he'd be a minister bye and bye."

I saw Charles Norton, it may be a month since, who represented his mother's condition pleasantly to me — although her mind is impaired.

The proprietress of No. 5 Appian Way wishes to be remembered to you.

I send you the hearty greetings and well-wishing of the Club. I shall have this ratified by the individuals solemnly, and promise to warn you if there is the least failure in readiness or heartiness, which makes it as good as under seal. I send to Mrs. Lowell also from the Club, such greeting as befits an Honorary member to receive.

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[1] William Cullen Bryant, American poet, had just died.

I really thought I had got to the last page, and I am glad there is more room. And now have I omitted anything. . . .

And so with kindest regards to Mrs. Lowell,

I am affectionately

Your old friend, J. H.

To Edward J. Holmes[1]

Cambridge, *October* 15, 1878.

My dear Edward, —

When you went off I had heard from your father that you desired to have no attendance of friends.

I got the same idea from J. R. L. about himself when he spoke of the bobbery they were going to make, he being forewarned thereof officially. Let this account for the absence of one white head from the ocean strand on that day.

I have sympathized and rejoiced when I found that you had evaded the grasp of the wheezing fiend and were having the full enjoyment of the breath of life. Tell your wife that regardless of the grades of affinity I involve her and the little Ned in the same complication of good wishes that I have woven for you; I hope that each and every of them may take effect on your health and prosperity — of all of you.

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[1] Holmes's nephew, who had gone abroad for his health.

If I should tell you the things I have not done since you left your native shore — the work I have not effected, it would make a vast and instructive volume of potentialities and impossibilities.

I have enclosed a little letter to Ned jr., pretty creature that he is, which I hope will impart a streak of social and kindly feeling to his little bosom in behalf of young Puffer, who seems a youth of ingenuous mind with small means of literary propulsion which he has improved as well as could be expected. His sporadic residences with collaterals may enlarge his knowledge of human nature but I think are adverse to his progress as a scholar.

"Youth is the seed-time of life," is what the old clock in Andover Academy used to say to the boys — its motto. I hope you have been sowing yours thick with good healthy pleasures, and if you will write me ever so briefly to that effect I will take it as a receipt in full for my two calligraphies now forwarded.

Perhaps I need not tell you that a large gymnasium (brick) is going up and just clears the front view from our old house, which has consequently (i.e. the proximity — not the salve to the view) been evacuated in disgust by William Everett, and Professor Thayer is to occupy it. Also that the house *quondam* Professor Pierce's has ambulated pleasantly across the fields, and its space is to be occupied by the new Sever Building.

Also that the Jacobs and Rebeccas have met at the well as of old, and the patriarchs and matriarchs have looked on and approved, and that pleasant weddings have resulted, some of which I have attended as a sentimental amateur.

And so wishing you all health and happiness, I sign myself

Your affectionate uncle
JOHN HOLMES.

To J. R. Lowell

CAMBRIDGE, *March* 6, 1879.

I sit me down this morning to write you a letter. Yes, actually a letter; and considering the time I have been about it I should not wonder if you were a little surprised on your part to see my χειρογραφια (chirography).

I can't tell you myself how I can have kept pen off paper so long, much less describe to you the curious sort of moral impossibility for me to write. And this too in face of your kind invitation to visit you. Perhaps though this was the first cause of my disability — for I found it hard to tell you how hard it would be for me to leave home for the winter — to become a Spaniard and have to go to the *Auto da fé* or be twisted into a letter S by the Inquisition. When I heard of your ill health (from which I am heartily rejoiced that you have recovered) I knew what the trouble was. I have n't read Fox's "Martyrs" for nothing. I knew you had been in their hands, but mum's the word. I have n't of course suggested it to your friends. I suppose you have come to an understanding with them now and are secure from τορτυρε (torture). (I write it in Greek for our private use.) A word to the wise — no more on that subject.

Methinks, James, that if I had enjoyed free ambulation, I could not have helped telling you when I went up by your place and maybe down by the New Road, by Simon's Hill with the Old Bath on my right suggestive of long past catastrophes. Yea, and if I had turned by Squire Bigelow's, and had passed the "Canal" on which Edward Bridge of that day played the bold Φœnician, and upset his tub, while his mother, in the background, adjured and threatened by turns; and if, turning, I had then passed the dwelling of Wm. Warland on the left, and of Dames Bridge and Wright and of Hersey on my right, and have gone to Brighton Bridge or College Wharf with a vision purged of all modern circumstance — if I had done this, methinks, I must have sent report of my visions to you. I should have thrust them well back into a time when you could not criticise, could only admire, a time when thou wast a puling babe.

But alas, I have made no such ambulations. I have learned to move in very small circles — to pace round the Common, or partially — and there, must I confess it to you? I have become in some slight degree wonted — shall I say it? — to modern change.

Monday, March 10.

As I proceed I declare to you, James, that I feel something vindicated in my long silence — all is preface to here, and what have I to tell you? Let us see. About myself, that autumn and winter I have walked very regularly in the common after breakfast, that my neighbor Elliott, when at home, has walked often with me, and that latterly James Howe has also turned out, making a formidable body of 3,000 men — that numeration is correct, is n't it? Some six weeks or more since, Elliott went *via* Cincinnati to Nebraska where he has undertaken to raise cattle, or leastwise to fatten them — and one morning James Howe told me he had an invitation from Baltimore to go in a sailing ship to Rio, and he went for N. York the same afternoon. So that we are now but 1.000 (I have some doubts about the action of my decimal point).

This walking and my day at home employed in persuading myself that I am an industrious citizen, and my little round of evening calls (the circuit now contracted) make up my record, with occasional runs to Boston to diversify. . . . To come down to present time, I dined at J. B.'s one Saturday two or three weeks since with Thayer, Lane, Van Brunt and C. W. S., who is careful and comparatively vigorous this winter. He dined with me Saturday, day before yesterday, and J. B., who could n't come to dinner, came in afterward. I went a week last Friday to George Putnam's to a high tea — it was a very high tea. We were Wentworth Higginson[1] and new wife, J. B. and wife, Mrs. Simmons (sister-in-law of Thayer) and daughter, Mrs. Child, and Anne Buttrick. It was very pleasant to be among so familiar a set, though in the case of Wentworth and wife, a savor of novelty. He, Wentworth, has taken up his abode in Cambridge in house *quondam* Rev. Wm. Ware's. We all had, I can say confidently, a very pleasant time, indeed!

I have been twice to the Arsenal Theatre, now quite an established institution. The second time was last Thursday to hear (and see) Wm. Everett's Operetta, which went off very well at this fourth representation; was very well attended. Mr. Longfellow there, among the rest.

Such a letter as this smacks of old age, does n't it? not in its very simple ideas I trust, but in its very limited range — its non record of gay visions, or athletic (*quasi* athletic) experiences. I don't tell you "how I went with Bowler and Bangs and Buster down to Point Shirley, and how we agreed to walk back and met Old Blowhard on the way — made us go home with him — never started from his house till 3, — home by 5½, did n't go to bed at all — did n't want to." More likely to say, "called in at Slopsters' — they at tea — took one cup (rather strong for me), tried half a glass of his currant wine being hard pressed; pleasant talk, and by mistake of time not home till 10.10, in bed at 10.15, or all together. Mem. To take nothing whatever after my dinner!" It was you who used to tell us of the Club in Boston, where the members used to call for tea and barley water and the like. Waldo Higginson was telling me a little while ago about two old gentlemen who went to Stockbridge — both I think born there or familiar there when very young. They had a man to drive them about in a wagon — the two seniors on the back seat. They were in a high state of contentment, each averring that he did n't feel a day older than during his young perambulations, — when the driver (very possibly irritated by this senile self-satisfaction) gave the horse a cut, and both the "old gents" went out over the tail of the wagon. They survived — but never to [be] juvenile again — poor fellows, — my sympathies are with them.

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[1] In the autumn of 1878, Colonel T. W. Higginson returned to Cambridge to live.

I went to visit William Upham[1] about a week since, who has bought a farm about 5 miles from Salem. He has a meadow, flowed and of course frozen. I saw a pair of skates, and told William that I should like just to try the experiment of being on skates again after thirty years or so. I was very modest about it, — made no professions of ability, but in my mind proposed to vindicate the old school by a pretty vigorous sortie. We went to the pond. I sat on a rail *aut al.* while William bored my heels to accommodate the modern screw. All was done — the skates were on, and I rose, closely attended by William (who may have formed his own estimate of my skating talent). If you'll believe it, my feet showed an invincible desire to seek the zenith. I could hardly believe it myself. — Finally, with William's hold of my arm and assuming a very curved posture, I skated about 3 rods, or less, leaving the oblique cuts as witnesses of the deed. You ought to have been there — you would have enjoyed it to the top of your bent. I could n't help being vastly amused though foiled on the athletic point, and rather disappointed.

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[1] His nephew, son of Charles W. Upham.

Tuesday, March 11.

We are having the weather of early April — mud plenty but not deep — snow almost gone. So far methinks it has been the finest autumn and winter that I remember. A great peculiarity has been, if I have noted rightly, the very great amount of calm weather through both seasons, that I seem to have no memory of the aggressive winds that rob caloric and make forcible impression upon body and mind. At the present time, this is at least the fourth day without noticeable wind. . . .

You will have heard of the deaths of Mrs. Dr. Walcott, Mrs. Palmer, Mr. Batchelder at 94, Capt. Hastings, 87, and lastly of Carter, — who died Saturday February 15 early in the morning. Doubtless Mrs. Carter informed you of it, but I will briefly mention the circumstances, and tell you about him, latterly. He has stayed at Mrs. Lamb's, corner Willard Street, next Ernest Longfellow's, this winter. I have called on him now and then and have found him very quiet — less interested about things in general than formerly —asking little about out-of-door matters in Cambridge. He for three or four months, perhaps more, had done little more in the way of excursion than take the car to Boston in the afternoon and back without leaving it. I called on him one forenoon in November and found him in bed — he had had a bad night. The doctor had been called, but as he had taken some black coffee the night or day before, one readily imputed his heart disturbance to that. I have heard since that he once had a bad time at Dieppe. After this turn that I have mentioned, I heard no more of any special trouble till his death. Mrs. Lamb says that he had seemed better, and on the evening before his death, was very cheerful. J. B. had given him some work — to make selections from Webster's writings—which pleased him greatly. I think however she mentions his feeling some little uneasiness when he went to bed. He rang a bell he had by him for Mrs. Lamb somewhere about 12. She found him much distressed and did what she could — put on a mustard poultice and finally gave him his usual dose of ten drops of laudanum and tucked the bedclothes about him and went out to warm herself — came in again and all seemed right — waited to catch the milkman to go for the doctor — went in again perhaps about 3, and found him dead — apparently without any movement at all — the bedclothes remaining as she had arranged them and the position such as she had left him in — the hands not stirred apparently.

The funeral took place on Wednesday 19th in the forenoon. Doctor Gray of the Episcopal Seminary read the service (in Mrs. Lamb's house). The Doctor, H. Ware and Cranch, Geo. Nichols, Owen and two or three other men. Mary Elliot, Mary Howe, and perhaps one or two more besides those of the Nichols family — yes, one of the Miss Parsons. Lowell Carter and Charles were there — the latter from Iowa where he is paymaster on some railroad. The Doctor, Cranch and I went up to the grave. H. Ware was too ill with a cold. I thought you might like to have me be thus particular in telling you. It seems that Carter had arranged all his papers and matters perfectly. A sketch of his life appeared in the "Literary World" on the day that he died.

They found him very amiable at Mrs. Lamb's, and seemed to have become very fond of him. I think in his social aspect he never appeared to better advantage than in these last few months, as a venerable gentle old man.

You see that there has been an unusual depletion in our neighborhood. The deaths were in the order in which I have put them except that Carter's came between Mr. Batchelder's and Capt. Hastings'.

Before any of them — about the middle of January — Michael Norton departed. You know of him — yes, surely — you know he had been very industrious and thrifty and had got an independence by forty, and was inclined to give an additional chance to thieves and moths, by still accumulating. It seems that in the highflown times now so well over, he took second mortgages, and the great depreciation swallowed his investments, whereon he pined, dwindled to a childish state and died. Let us not be hard on him even though he might be somewhat hard. He had no children and his treasures took the place of them. He had housed and fed them and seen them grow under his care, and whatever outside — they had always a smile for him. Bonds and mortgages seemed to rise like olive branches around his table and call him blessed. They seemed to say, "Let us repay thee for thy care," and little innocent gold dollars in a stocking or silver change in a teapot, — perhaps you and I should yearn over such a hoard if we had ever been led to make one.

If you should write me some of these days, you could tell me if there was anything special that you wished to hear about and I would write you.

I don't know that such a letter as this can help you to make pictures of Old Cambridge much — I don't have many visions of O. C. myself.

You must give my very kindest regards to Mrs. Lowell who no doubt speaks Spanish freely by this time.

I have heard of your election into the Academy,[1] and with such a pleasant circumstance and a now, pretty long residence I can't but think you must be quite happy.

If you should write me to that effect, I would make some little pilgrimages about Cambridge and report when the weather improves into something like spring.

Meanwhile I am ever,
Yours affectionately.

I went last evening with J. B. to call on Wentworth Higginson, newly married and living in Rev. Wm. Ware's *quondam* house; played whist till 11, a most remarkable thing. J. B. sends his very tiptop regards and I send Choate's and if he does n't ratify my message I will let you know.

To C. W. Storey

Cambridge, *April* 30, 1879.

My dear Charles, —

I came to your office a week yesterday to get you, when lo! the young men said: "He lieth by the Brook Kishan under the shadow of Mount Gilboa.

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[1] The Royal Spanish Academy at Madrid.

The Gouttims and the Rumtums lay in wait for him, and have pierced his foot with a dart, that he lieth in his tent and crieth unto them that pass, 'Ho! what tidings be there by land or by sea that I may refresh my soul therewith? For lo! I am weary. Give me tobboc (πιηπι)[1] that I may smoke.' Then come his wife and his little ones, and do tend on him and cherish him that he crieth out aloud, and singeth a new song.

"The Gouttim and the Rumtum did waylay me
They shot me in the foot
The young men brought me home
My bed was as brambles
I rested not for pain
And I said I am sore afflicted
I walk not, but lie as a babe
The snail mocketh at me and saith
Go to! wilt thou run a race with me?
        As a fee, feemounted; with aspect double
Or testament that goes forth ambulatory
That man hears of, but sees walking never
So am I in my tent, hid in red flannel
Strange and not visible, but I walk not like them
While I cry thus, cometh my spouse Lizbet
Ever kind and consoling with kind sister Mary
Cometh Moful, and Maran and little Sosec
They so beset me with kindly attention
As crowded my griefs out, and I sat up and sang
Oh for a blow at the Gouttim and Rumtum!
Where be my weapons — my senna, my manna
Soul-searching Tarrant — flashing Chloral
Hoist my red flannel banner — Have at them
Soon they shall fly shrieking — soon lie flaccid
Cloven, shattered, busted, and I rising gaily
Will run victorious

[1] Chaldee.

Chase and catch the horse-cars
Also the steam, if I care to
Will dance round dances — also square ones
Enter for foot races — carry off prizes.
So I sang — at this juncture they passed me my chloral
And I slept, or we'd had a good family choral."

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *September* 27, 1879.

I write to tell you how sorry I am for the trouble you are in and that I hope it will soon come to a favorable end.

I met President Eliot a week ago in the car and he was wishing you back.

Choate, J. B., and the residue of our world here, are going on as usual. C. has been at Marblehead all summer. J. B. has made excursions from Cambridge headquarters.

He gave three Plymouth girls — nay four — a week's trip to White Mountains, — J. patron, and H. matron, to the party. He is furiously at work on a new-plan index to Shakespeare.[1]

The new house for the Dean of the Episcopal School is finished — pretty nearly — it is just east of the chapel.

I send this little note to express sympathy and it is by no means confined to me. If I don't hear particularly from or about you, I shall run the risk of writing a prolix and perhaps inapposite letter.

Meanwhile your affectionate friend.

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[1] The *Shakespeare Phrase Book.*

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *November* 12, 1879.

I take pleasure in thinking that your situation is much improved by this time; — in other words that Mrs. Lowell is much better. I have not heard of any want of health on your part lately and trust there has been none. There has been all the time a report of Mrs. Lowell's health circulating here and generally I think a correct one.

Mabel[1] was kind enough to write me a note telling me of her decided improvement.

So that now I hope I see the dawn of a better time for you both, when past misery shall only sharpen your appreciation of present happiness.

Let me try now to infuse into a short letter something of the home flavor that so refreshes the sojourner in a strange land (Here I want a word. Gale, zephyr, blast, whiff. Suppose we weld the Latin root and Teutsch form together and say "flast," equivalent in force to "whiff" but having a gentle self-impelling power which whiff has not.)

I should like then to send you a flast from one of our old-fashioned beds of herbs — sage, thyme, winter and summer savory and the like, or a mild exhalation from oozy Charles, or a flastula of pine cone or a flastulilula from Craigie's placid pool. But perhaps I should unduly agitate the home associations. Now then let us turn to the weather.

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[1] Lowell's daughter, Mrs. Edward Burnett.

. . . I never have been one, nor you, who depreciated and abused the weather as a topic. It is beautiful, salutary, large, as a subject; — adaptable to every degree of intellect, and extending itself to embrace the interests of the larger family circle, of town, neighborhood, state and country. It is therefore really a cosmopolitan theme. It only becomes petty when reduced to its lowest topical grade, — to measuring inches of local wind and the like. Even then it is a mild and healthy irritant to the social system. It seems to me that people hardly appreciate the value of the mere mental irritant, irrespective of its intellectual value. If our friend Doctor Johnson could have enacted Robinson Crusoe for a year or so (and should n't we have liked to hear him talk to his parrot and his goats?) how gladly would he have discussed with his fellow flotsam a little loggerheaded cabin boy, suppose just above zero mentally, every phase of wind and weather, now caressing him as his sole social fragment and now piling him with thundering denunciations for his stupidity. Probably, in the absence of all means of comparison he would attribute quite a respectable intellect to his companion. "Sir," he would say when he had arrived back at Bolt Court, "Sir, Billy was not a fool. He could not, it is true, disintegrate and analyze heterogeneous masses of fact, he could not generalize nor was he eminent for accuracy in any department of truth; but Sir, he could reciprocate specific ideas which my animals could not do, and Sir, I now look back with pleasure to many conversations that I have held with him on the weather and the more obvious celestial phœnomena and, Sir, in one department at least Billy displayed ingenuity. I could never find a place for my goatsmilk cheeses that was secure from his investigations. He was a boy of unbounded gulosity and, Sir, it was that that occasioned his death three days before my happy deliverance." Then would follow an explosion of grief.

But where in the meantime is our weather report?

One day we had in June that reminded me of you stretched on those cruel gridirons, and taking your little grill for your soul's good. But mum's the word about that. I never have said a word about the *ινκυιςτιον* to anybody. I always call it gout or rheumatism. But on the whole the summer was rather cool. September likewise. But then out stepped gallant old Uncle October with one fist full of sunshine and the other on the nozzle of the Æolian windbag. He was ashamed of the churlish behavior of his elder brother (old Sep), and there he stood with a pleasant smile dropping one golden day after another down to earth. We had a wonderful succession of very fine, clear, warm days. I don't remember a single hazy Indian summer day through this season. Then in November again we have had a premature flurry or two of snow which thawed off here but I think in the country must have remained, it was so deep. My friend Doctor Ware went to his house at West Rindge the other day and waded to his knees in snow.

I have as usual been to West Rindge this summer and to Mattapoisett, but I have also taken what with my stationary habit I may consider an immense voyage, i.e. from Portland to Mt. D. I have been to Mt. Desert! and bounced about in buckboards with young people at a great rate. I found Cambridge folk too at the house where I stayed, the Fosters (at whose suggestion I made the excursion), Mrs. Swan and daughters, Mrs. Allyn and Abbot Vaughan, etc., etc. I never fell in with many Cambridge people before in my travels.

Some one told me that the Hayeses had counted a great number of herons.

I think I must intercalate a leaf. I have made out to tell you so very little in so large a space. All goes on here with the usual quietness. J. B. has got his steam up and is working zealously on his new book, a Shakespeare concordance, on a new plan. Choate finds a great deal of business to do as President of the O. C. Railroad. I have not called on him since his return from his summer stay at Marblehead (I believe it was). Dunham Hedge died some two months ago. I believe I have told you every time I have written of Michael Norton's death. Probably also of Mr. Batchelder's and Captain Hastings's, but it's no harm to impress the necrology on your memory. The doctor goes quietly along — he is treasurer of the New York and N. England railroad as well as of the Gas Co. . . .

Palmer reads the Odyssey in Harvard, and I think Child reads Chaucer.[1] They are going to have four or five subscription concerts at Sanders Theatre this winter, as last. The Gymnasium is nearly or quite finished. Sever Hall has got to its growth as they say — in point of height — and will be a handsome building. It is to have ornamental mouldings done in the brick itself.

With regard to our local market (in Appian Way) I think myself that "pie apples" have been overdone and are rather languid. "Rags" continue steady. If I had made any perambulations lately I should tell you of them but I have taken almost all my walks close about home or in Boston.

I hope, my dear James, that this chaotic letter will find both you and Mrs. Lowell so well, that both can bear with equanimity its erratic tediousness. I send kind remembrances and love from J. B. and C. C., and if they don't ratify it I will let you know.

Don't feel constrained to answer this — no, not in the least. Is n't "*tace*" Latin for a candle. A word to the wise. My kindest regards and congratulations to Mrs. Lowell on her improvement.

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[1] Professors G. H. Palmer and F. J. Child gave evening readings, open to the public.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *December* 1, 1879.

I sent you a letter some time since of a cheerful complexion, thinking that as things were improving with you, you might like something faintly rose-tinged from O. C. I don't keep a very great deal of that color on hand, so I don't think it likely that it was overcharged. I have been on the point for some days of wedding the female "*plume*" to the male "*papier*" and am now as you see performing the ceremony. Is that poetical enough for ye? I am now contending against a strong impulse to repeat my last letter word for word, circumstances and ideas being much the same as at that date. No. 5 Appian Way is the centre from which my thoughts radiate and from which my views of the great world are mostly shaped. If A. W. is quiet and serene I infer that the rest of the habitable world is in the same case — if A. W. is tumultuous with the energies of trade or from other cause I appreciate the elements of unrest that lurk in all places and all forms of government. Such is local influence which I have no doubt, James, you will allow for. I should say just now that this continent was in a very tranquil state — A. W. is eminently so. The weather has been since September pretty largely mild, with occasional threats of premature winter. The farmers in the interior of N[ew] E[ngland] a part of them got caught by the snow with their potatoes in the ground and apples on the trees, but have since had the blockade raised, and we may conjecture dug their potatoes with something of spasmodic energy. So much for weather which finally, and to conclude, was this morning in A. W. (I don't vouch for it anywhere else), brisk at about 20° and fair — this evening was a grain clouded and mildening when I made my social tour.

We have had the caucus, the delegates, the convention and a nominee, Hall, a business man in Boston, for Mayor, and a second caucus, etc., a second nominee, Fox, for the same office, the object of all hands however being the same, viz. to continue the City government in the course of economy and "pay as you go" which has prevailed for two or three last years. Tomorrow is voting day and I may hold important destinies in my hand should I chance to have the casting vote, which is not probable. The caucuses were very well attended. People are waking up to the importance of primary meetings.

J. B. has had (I suppose acute) bronchitis for nearly a month; is somewhat improving.

I saw him tonight after tea, for the second time only, as talking makes him cough. He wished me to come in to the tea table where he was, and he looked quite well considering — he ratifies the expressions of good will that I sent in my last on his account and renews them for this letter. I called in on Choate as I came down — he also ratifies, confirms and renews his kind regards to you.

He has a grandson about a week old; — he tells me that he has bought a farm for his son very near Edward Burnett's. I think he feels the work of O. C. President to be very heavy.

Horatio Bigelow[1] wrote me from London the other day desiring a letter of introduction to you. He thinks to visit Spain in the early Spring, so I am sending you very early advance sheets as they say of the introduction. I will remind you now that he married a daughter of Albert Smith of Portland and a niece (I believe it is) of Admiral Smith, whose son perished in the attack of the *Merrimac* on the *Congress* and *Cumberland* frigates. He is a man whom I think you will like very much, with a fine modest manliness that neither exaggerates nor depreciates itself, but meets the world handsomely on its merits. I like him and his wife and family very much myself, though not having had much acquaintance with the two latter, — by family I mean the two daughters who with their mother will accompany him, whom I saw when I made a little visit to him a year or two since. They are High Church, as perhaps you know.

I think I must have told you in my last — yea I am quite sure — that I went to Mount Desert this summer and bounced about with young people in buckboards — combining I hope some of the youthful qualities of Telemachus with the venerable aspect of Mentor.

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[1] Horatio Bigelow, a classmate of Holmes; died in 1888.

I don't believe that I told you of my going to a conference at Waltham as Delegate last summer, and how I made the Report, and how I met Judge Hoar, and how we smoked in a vehicle in the shed during the intermission and after the lunch, and how I was deeply impressed with the hospitable attentions of the Waltham maidens. I quite like such things — they remind me of Primitive Christianity though the ice cream is a little ante-chronical — but then I did not get any of it to disturb my associations.

Father Scully down at the Port is making a move to take the Catholic children out of the schools, and establishing parochial schools in their place; but I hardly think he carries his people well with him. I declare, James, when I wrote this last I forgot all about the Inquisition. I am sorry I touched upon it.

Don't feel in the least bothered about answering this — I shall write again soon. My best hopes for you and Mrs. Lowell go with this, and I subscribe myself

Yours affectionately.

To J. R. Lowell

December 5, 1879.

Since I wrote the foregoing four pages I have had doubts raised in my mind whether you were yet in a situation to enjoy a letter written in the ordinary tone, and I thought to substitute a mere expression of my affection and sympathy for you; but on looking over what I have written I find it of so very quiet a complexion that I conclude to send it tomorrow. It is now about 5, almost dark, — the day has been mild and still and sunshiny, and the mud from late rain pretty flagrant — no, pretty deep in the street.

I voted on Tuesday (which was like today for weather) for Hall who was chosen by some 140 majority only over Fox — both candidates professing to be of the same financial mind, and economy being equally professed as the chief aim by both parties. It is said that a very few years persistence in the course taken for the last three years will materially lighten our taxes by paying off our debt.

I met Professor Child at the polls, and have the pleasure of sending you his love, clearly and explicitly expressed.

I had three nephews to dine with me on Thanksgiving day.

I went with Mr. and Mrs. Gurney on Wednesday evening to Palmer's reading of the 11th book of the Odyssey which was exceedingly well done. We all had our Odysseys and followed the reading.

You may have heard — you probably have — of the Chinese Professor[1] so called — being one of their learned men, and propelled to these shores as I understand by some generous influence in China, perhaps aided here. He is situated like the Vicar of Wakefield's son in Holland, who would have taught the Dutch English but discovered that he must know Dutch first. So they have been putting the Professor through the rudiments of English. He has an interpreter, so that he possibly might begin instruction, but I hear that there has not been one application to learn. A month or two since the universal question was, "Have you seen (or, called on) the Chinese Professor?" He lives now with his family, wife and several children, in the brick block on Mason St.

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[1] Ko Kun-Hua was instructor in Chinese, 1879–1882.

Dr. Gray's new house, "The Rectory" on the Seminary grounds, is finished to appearance (Van Brunt, Architect) and is I think in good keeping with the other buildings.

I ought to have said that the Chinese Professor attended a party at Mrs. Swan's in Berkeley Street two or three weeks since, and was quite the central figure — he is of refined manners, I hear.

Now, James, I am going to close my script, always hoping that you will very soon be, if you are not now, in a condition to enjoy a stupid letter from a friend who hails from Old Cambridge.

Never think about answering unless circumstances have fairly brightened up, so that it would be an easy and natural performance. With much love to you and to my poor Mrs. Lowell, who I hope is now well recovering,

Yours truly.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *January* 22, 1880.

The accounts from you are now favorable and I trust you are in a way to enjoy life again. I know you have had a dreadful time but I hope it has not pulled you down beyond the power to recover your old cheerfulness.

I can only attempt to give you a little pleasure by a simple account of things here. It is so little of a narrative too, that I hardly know where to begin it. If a bear should undertake to give an account of his hibernation, he would be rather put to it to make his communication fill a quarter of a page like this. I entirely sympathise with him. But it would have a sort of Old Cambridge flavor if I should say, "On such a day I started from 'down in town' (not, 'the square') and reached Boston by the way of Lechmere's Point (alias the P'int) took the time from the Old State House clock, and going by Court Street to the office returned over West Boston Bridge (I think it used to be spelt with a capital B) and so by Cambridge Port over Clark's Hill (Broadway) to No. 5 Appian Way, where I found that the walking had responded with its usual sensitiveness to the weather, being in a very tender mood." But alack! I am not strong on this humble species of narrative, being just now rather held at home by that venerable sheet anchor — my knee.

I went on December 17th evening to a (first) lecture on Ancient Rome by a Mr. Spalding who married one of the Plymptons. The lecture was in the Orthodox church near the railroad station, formerly the Baptist church near our house. I went with Henry Ware. I enjoyed it — plenty of stereopticon, and very good — the explication and narration good also. I enjoyed it much. Perhaps a new opera-glass — bought that day — gave a secret chattel charm to the lecture, which my intellectual portion scorned to acknowledge; but at any rate I was thoroughly Romanized for the time. If anybody had addressed me as I came out as Johannes Holmesino I think I should have said, "*Quid ais, Romane,*" or something else that was n't quite the right thing, for I never expect to get Latin right. As we were going up I said to H. W. "This is April weather," which it was precisely, but when we came out, the weather cock having meanwhile given a hint to the Genius of Winter (shall I say) by setting his nose in a N. West direction, it was bitterly cold, and was next morning something like 12° above — Marry come up, say 5° real cold winter weather any how, so I reversed Hannibal, had my Capua first at the lecture and the Alps afterward. D 'ye call that classical — A little so, eh? Well, my knee up and told me to stop that business, not to go to another Rome lecture, and I have not been.

I went to a Lyceum Hall concert though, about a week ago, because it savored of the pristine

(Cantabrigian) age. A son of our old friend Nat Munro, the singer, was to perform (*inter alios*) on the flute. The bill of fare mentioned "the following artists," etc. There was also a son of Daniels, a very fair tenor. I sat it all through, and applauded most loyally, sometimes obligato with my hands and occasionally staccato with my cane. Musical error — Both were staccato of course. "Len." Daniels is gone, poor fellow, a number of months since. I don't know whether I told you. Old Mrs. Chamberlain (formerly Lyon, widow of Leonard) died a week last Monday, and Mr. Dana, of the Bank, has just departed, aged 99 as I hear.

We have just seen, within a day or two, your appointment to England.[1] I hope you are so situated that you can accept. At all events that you can duly enjoy the honor.

I am going to write to Mabel for a more particular account of you.

Charles Storey came out at about 2 on Saturday with me and dined and we played pickup — also discoursed, and he went at about 8.

Cambridge is in a very tranquil state. If Gov. Winthrop or Deputy Gov. Endicott could revive a little while, I think we should hear a few words of doctrine, here and elsewhere, that would make a stir for a while.

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[1] On January 20, 1880, President Hayes appointed Lowell Minister to England. Secretary of State Evarts, in cabling the announcement, said (the President) "regards it as essential to the public service that you should accept and make your personal arrangements to repair to London as early as may be." Lowell in his reply said: "Could accept if allowed two months' delay. Impossible to move or leave my wife sooner."

Henry Ware went yesterday Delegate to a Conference at Newton Corner and returned in a good frame, having been hospitably cared for.

Your aff. old friend.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS SUNSET

In 1880 Mr. Holmes had a hankering to see Europe again. The impression of the discomforts of the earlier visit had worn off. Perhaps he wearied a little of his routine life and the shortness of its tether: perhaps he hoped against hope, as chronic invalids will, that a change of scene would benefit him. For his lameness grew worse rather than better, and to it was added the affliction of intermittent trouble with his eyes. So in the late spring he packed up and set sail as valiantly as could be expected of an invalid 68 years old. After a short excursion to Norway he crossed to Holland and then went up the Rhine to Bonn, where he established himself for a longer stay.

The third letter that follows he wrote to the young daughter of his old crony, Dr. Charles Ware.

To John Bartlett

Bonn, *September* 24, 1880.

My dear J. B., or, I will say,
My dear Bartlett Pair, —

I do hope that all goes well with you, and that I shall hear so, — receive word to that effect, — under the hand of the senior partner of the firm.

London, Hull, Christiania, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Bonn — That is the route that I have been, and you will find it much better than a poor skimble-skamble, halfway itinerary.

I have been here in Bonn about two months and almost all that time in my room — but have made myself pretty cheerful working away at my hobby.

Not but that my thoughts have travelled Cambridgeward many times and taken a number of silent trips up Brattle Street.

I am getting back to about my former condition.

I wish that you, J. B., would write me with as much friendship as when you wrote me before, if not with quite so much steam.

If you will only write me the history of your quarter of the town since I have been gone, including most expressly your own and Mrs. B.'s summer experience, — I should enjoy it much.

And here a thought strikes me. A man would n't fear half so much the task of writing to a friend abroad if it did n't seem to demand such an extent of information because it was going so far.

I therefore change the form of my request — Just jot me down briefly the events of the summer, mostly of your own experience — and hold out some hope that you will write again. It is scarcely more to send a letter here than to Boston, and there is therefore no need to make a heavy job of it. Then, if you would wish to know any particulars of my trip — or of my residence here — I will with much pleasure impart.

I saw James in London a number of times — but what with official and social engagements his time was much taken up. I have heard from him since I was here. I should think he was getting a little tired of public life. Mrs. Lowell, he says, is learning again, to walk.

I know this is a shockingly meagre letter but write me on all the familiar home topics — and if you care for a more minute account of my movements I will give it with great pleasure.

I have several letters on hand — have just written two — a part of the several, — and must stop now. I send this to the Post as they say here, tomorrow and have another, or two more to write.

So I subscribe
With a hearty desire to see you both
Very truly
Your old friend
JOHN HOLMES.

Please direct to J. H.,
No. 1 Thoma Strasse,
Bonn, Germany.

Saturday morning, September 25.

You must excuse this very meagre letter which I have just looked over. I had so much to write that I got eyes, and even my old friend the knee, used up.

I had an exceedingly pleasant passage out, and after that nothing very much out of the common way — in fact I have been a lame old man — and that makes all the difference. I have not been able to knock about though better than when here before.

To John Bartlett

Bonn, *November* 18, 1880.

Fine weather for some ten
days, after several weeks' cold
rain — a drop or two of snow,
and general baddishness.

My dear J. B., —

I was thinking to write you that you need not bother yourself about writing to me, knowing what a horrid boar (how do you spell that — most forgotten my English) it often is even to friends and growing worse the longer they wait, till his tusks stick out about a foot, and they are shy of going near him (how do you like this parenthesis style? rather neat is n't it?) — when on November 8 in the morning I received your capital letter postmarked October 19.

You ought to have witnessed my enthusiastic demonstrations after reading it. I was tempted to answer on the moment — but I have had a good deal of trouble with my eyes, and I was n't up to it.

I only give you a receipt for your letter now, — but when better will repay good with evil by giving you a more circumstantial and tedious account of my proceedings than hitherto — and should be glad at the same time — if I were learned enough — to write Sister Bartlett a letter in High Dutch.

One curious thing I must mention — I heard that "Hullo" when you first mentally uttered it.

I was exceedingly perplexed. "That's Brother Bartlett" — I said — "Sure — What can he want?" and then it flashed across me.

"It's the old Smelters!" I exclaimed; "they want me! I know all the places in Massachusetts Bay where there are n't any smelts and I could show them the others."

And I felt pretty badly for a little while — as you may think.

I won't write any more now.

Give my love to Sister Bartlett.

Yours affectionately.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Bonn, *December* 2, 1880.
No. 1, Thoma Strasse.

Meine liebe Mariechen, —

(that is all the Deutsch I can spare)

I wish I had material for a pleasant letter, but I don't see it. [I can give no equivalent for the pleasant letters that your papa and you so kindly sent me, and you must be content with the consciousness of unrequited generosity.]

I seem to have been landed here in the second story of my pension in my little island much as R. Crusoe was tossed up on his strand; but I have not found my man Friday, unless possibly in the person of Herr Ludwig, brother-in-law of my old landlady. He was several years in Australia digging gold, of which he got a moderate portion, and is now Lieutenant General in the pension. We occasionally wander in "the Bush" together. He tells me of this man who delved industriously without a ray of gold-shine, and of two men (in company) who at the very first digging came across a fortune for both and went home in the next ship. There was a moral attached though, for one or both took to the other kind of quarts and drank themselves back to their "point of beginning," as deeds have it. — But I must not retail Herr Ludwig's stories to you.

Bonn is a pretty place enough, rather straggling. There is a little nucleus of the old town remaining, nothing to speak of. You and I, who have read Freeman, know how they used to batter and burn down the towns with their sieges every few years — I don't know exactly what for; unless to encourage the citizens to build — and they could n't have a greater inducement; but I don't pretend to go into the philosophy of history. — The newer part is all of brick stuccoed — a style of which I am rather tired — I think it very shabby compared with our faced brick. Sidewalks poor — some pleasure grounds with fine trees — but not very spacious or well-kept, I think. But I can't go about and view things leisurely — I content myself with my regular walk — now that I can walk — in the outskirts where my pension is. But the country is naturally beautiful. It is the rich valley of the Rhine, and every growth gives a hint of a fine, strong soil. The rich level is bounded in the distance with fine hills, and even a young mountain or two. I have found in my short walks a splendid poplar eighty or ninety feet high, I should think. It is among the "half-hardy" trees and suffers with us; but I am reminded here what a fine tree it may be. It seems to me that in tree-architecture the poplar is the spire, and serves a good purpose as such among the lower trees.

My eyes are getting tired — and I want to have this go this afternoon by the messenger who takes my letters to the office.

I have not enlarged my acquaintance out of the family — unless by a sort of acquaintance with a Canon of the Church, Vitalian Joseph Fortiveri — but he is a deceased Canon, died 1842, aged ninety-one and lies in the pretty Bonn cemetery which I go by almost every morning on my walk.

I see cavalry, some hundred or so, occasionally in my morning walk, and that reminds me that I review my troops pretty frequently mounted on my immense German warhorse (hobby). I should be delighted if you could attend one of my reviews, my troops should offer you every military honor.

Accept this straggling letter with renewed thanks for yours. Give my kindest regards to papa and mama and believe me,

Very truly your old friend.

I have forgotten the flourish I promised.

To Miss E. Q. Swan

Bonn, *January* 28, 1881.

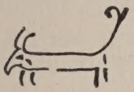
You allude to my Deutsch acquirements. My poor hobby has been much neglected. I think I have learned enough however to puzzle the natives with their own *sprache*—and that is something—

My lame eye like a fretful invalid says—"There, if you are going to write, I won't stand it,"—and you know how we have to humor these invalids.

I hope you will be pleased with the following which I have taken some pains to procure—

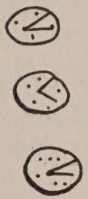
We, the undersigned, sentimental, though not actually social friends of Herr Holmes, wishing to send our love to Fraulein Elizabeth Quincy Swan of Cambridge U.S.A. do accordingly empower him as our attorney to send the same.

duck



little white dog

rooster



Three
cuckoo
clocks

BONN, *January* 29, 1881.

I, Joseph Vitalian Bonner, Notary have hereto as proxy affixed the signature of the above parties, and subscribed my name.

JOSEPH VITALIAN BONNER.

NOTARIAL
SEAL

In the spring of 1880 Lowell took up his quarters in London, where he remained, to the satisfaction of his countrymen and the acceptance of the British, until March 1885. He welcomed Holmes on his appearance in London. Mrs. Lowell's health broke down before they left Spain, and her illness was a constant source of solicitude to John Holmes as the letters which we have read and others that are to follow bear witness. She died February 19, 1885.

TO J. R. LOWELL

PARIS, *March* 25, 1881.

I proceed now to answer your very kind note of March 21.

I am hoping to be in good condition for a start next Monday or Tuesday for Calais and Dover. I have thought it best to write to my former hostess of 9 Craven Street to be ready to give me or help to get me comfortable lodgings.

I shall be delighted to come to your house and see Mrs. Lowell again as well as yourself. I am very glad to hear of her improvement.

I had a letter to Doctor Crane here, who was educated as physician but became engaged as Editor of the *American Register* published here. He thinks that there is no probability whatever of your recall, and he gave me his reasons very reasonably for that opinion — says also that you are very popular in England, which you would probably not need his statement to learn.

I am delighted with your lines "In Arcadia," which I found in a number of the *Parisian.*

My kindest regards and congratulations on her improvement,—Mrs. Lowell. My love to you both.

Your old friend.

I have been somewhat laid up, but have not mentioned it to friends at home but vaguely — so if you or Mrs. Lowell write home, don't speak of it, please.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *June* 22, 1881.

Don't think it strange that you have not heard from me earlier.

I had much ado to shake myself down into the old situation, and then I had to go about and inform my friends of my absence for a year so that they might congratulate me on my return.

I am happy to say that I found everything, and almost everybody *in statu quo.* I did n't miss even a single familiar voice from the chorus of cats which performs nightly, under the leadership as I am fain to think of our Tom. The poor fellow has paid dearly for the distinction; somebody fired saltpetre into him, which has had a dismal effect on his constitution and there is a subdued whisper about chloroform.

If you were talking with me now you would be sure to ask me if I went to the Greek Play.[1] That question was asked here 25,000 times, allowing 50 interrogatories to each of 500 people. Well, as you ask me, I answer that I did go, and to the best of my knowledge and belief all was very Greek except the music, which made the comments and forebodings of the chorus rather uproarious and was said to be in itself very good.

If you have heard anything from Cambridge you must have heard all about the "Greek Play." So I say no more. Such a pretty Jocasta!

I don't believe your village patriotism is impaired a bit, although maybe overlaid at present by the pleasures of English society. If I strolled about as I did in younger days I should send you the impressions of my walks, to recall familiar places — but I do little more than to visit in the evening and make occasional grand expeditions to Boston, where I collogue in a very moderate way with Charles Storey.

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[1] The *Œdipus Rex* of Sophocles was performed by Harvard students in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, in May, 1881. The music was composed by Professor J. K. Paine. Leonard E. Opdycke, of the Class of 1880, played Jocasta.

Although in abeyance, you must not forget the Club. J. B. is at work on a concordance of Shakespeare and becomes so eager to finish his work that it quite absorbs him. I see him but little.

Choate continues to work harder than he likes to, always holding up visions of retirement and a farm. I have seen him once since I returned.

J. R. L. and Mrs. L. are abundantly enquired after and I give the best account of them. Indeed, my last call upon you (when there was a rest in the invitations) left an impression quite like that of a call here at home, a very pleasant one — for of course it was the pleasantest way of seeing you possible, and it gives a more lively flavor to all my answers to enquiring friends. I should have liked right well to have made a longer session than I did.

At this point I may as well tell you that I went to Liverpool on the 12th of April, sailed on the 13th and arrived on Sunday the 24th. I found that, unknown to myself and without effort on my part, I had acquired such popularity abroad that some nine hundred foreign citizens insisted on accompanying or rather escorting me to my native shore. The Sunday that we arrived was very cold at 7 or thereabouts when I went on deck, and I inferred harsh weather on shore; but in the afternoon in Boston harbor it was a hot summer day.

I have actually been out to Class Day — to the performances in the Sanders Theatre, and afterward to one of the College Society rooms. What used in my day to make a little world of itself is now so closely surrounded by a bigger world, as to be relatively dwindled. The whole affair seemed, as regarded myself, rather irrelevant, except so far as I might rejoice in the growth of other people's olive branches. I was persuaded to go to the dance about the tree and on my return found Charles Storey here, who is now with me and sends his love to you.

Don't feel any irksome necessity to write an answer to this, for I know well how you are pressed with business and social demands on you. We all take great pleasure to see you filling your place so very handsomely (perhaps I may say brilliantly, by your leave).

If I thought of anything to tell you that I did n't think already told, you should have it. Accept this poor letter only as a token of my affection for you. Give my love and best wishes to Mrs. Lowell and believe me,

Yours sincerely.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *November* 2, 1881.

I will send you a line informing you that I still inhale the vital here in our old town.

I have been exceedingly pleased with your speech in Exeter Hall (among many others). Indeed I can say that throughout, as U. S. M., "you have my approbation," and, if you please, insert "highest" between the two last words.

I asked all about you from Susan Carter and was very glad to hear of Mrs. Lowell's great improvement, and of your continuance *in statu quo*, which I thought a very good one.

We had our Class Dinner some little time since. John Dwight, on his invitation, urged "the survivors" to attend. Twelve were present and very sufficiently venerable they looked. Every one there undoubtedly was impressed by the senescence of eleven others — told his wife so, if he had one, and then looked in the glass to see the twelfth man, the exception.

We have n't had an excitement here since the Greek Play — which fairly supplanted the weather — every one asking for the first thing, "Been to the Greek Play?" and those who had not been, answering despondently, defiantly or expectantly as the case might be. I went to Choate's at Southboro about a month since and staid from Saturday to Monday; but Mabel and her husband with the other young folks were on an excursion. . . .

We've had no Club you know since you went. I should be right glad to see you home again, but I hope that you will have the opportunity to stay as long as you wish.

Your friends so far as I know are well. I don't know that you were at all acquainted with Dr. Newell — his funeral took place on Monday. One old friend of yours is in the last stages of decay to-wit — the Washington Elm — I was going by it and found two men inspecting a large branch which had just come down *sua sponte*, or rather by force of gravitation. We philosophers must deal accurately with principles as far as we go.

I don't wish you to bother yourself with answering this. I only write to seem to keep up some little alliance with you. I have told people here of the quantity of social business you have to do in addition to the diplomatic.

Do give my kindest regards to Mrs. Lowell, and congratulate her on the additional health I presume her to have gained, since Susan Carter came away.

Yours affectionately.

TO JOHN BARTLETT

CAMBRIDGE, *November* 7, 1881.

MY DEAR J. B., —

Methinks one who receives the great budget of Shaksperian thought — its rays so deftly parted and assorted that with a few twirls of thumb and finger, he can turn on, from one candle-power upward, and of all hues, from a pink to a thunder cloud, may well add a word or two to his vocal acknowledgment.

"To be acknowledged, Madam, is to be o'er paid."[1]

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[1] The *Shakespeare Phrase Book* was dedicated to Mrs. Bartlett.

(This is addressed to the H. B. of the Dedication, — an ungracious sentiment from a donee, which I insert only to illustrate the merits of the book.)

"The force of his own merit makes his way."

(This to J. B.)

The preface I consider quite a model; — saying exactly what it wants to say and no more — perfectly clear and concise; and the Dedication may surely claim the two qualities I attribute to the Preface.

I am glad that the brief episode of the Waste Basket is attached to the Magnum Opus. The bold emancipation of the author from his own tyranny — the ferocious hurling of his work to apparent destruction — the savage exultation of the mob (of one) — the calm resistance of the conservative party (of one) — the return of the mob to reason, and of the tyrant to power, — when the outcast of the night before is raised and hugged by the repentant populace — it is altogether an admirable dramatic arrangement, in which a terrific combination of tragic elements (all that the supposed spectator can bear) — suddenly culminates in wise resolution — unanimous action and general happiness. — Had not the insensate mob changed its mind.

"You had then left unseen a wonderful piece of work."

Let me hope that your furor for hard work, however meritorious, is well abated, or cured.

> "I heard a grizzled grandsir say,
> And thrice he smote his crutch upon the floor,
> 'Oh, that my life I could again live o'er, —
> For one day's work I would have three of play.'"

Listen to his counsel.

With kindest regards to the Bartlett Pair

I am

Theirs.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *December* 14, 1882.

My dear Minister, —

When will you return to be re-installed in your own First Parish? Now and then someone conjectures that you will never care to come back to dwell in your old town. If I thought you were in such a mood, I would stretch my talent for necromancy to the uttermost to raise the shades of venerable citizens by your bedside until your oppidanism should revive. Holt, Danforth, Lyon, vinous B——r, sincere and ardent appreciator of the alcoholic, whose tracks in Cambridge, if perpetuated like the birds', would be a problem for archæologists — these at least should watch your slumbers and I your waking. A view of our worthies in spiritual vesture (yet so far corresponding to their earthly modes as to preserve, for instance, Danforth's tall hat) would start all the old fancies now buried under diplomacy and London life. Your enquiry would be, as you viewed the familiar forms, "What's the matter? Anybody drowned at the 'Old Bath'? Is Captain Ruggles out with the Light Infantry? How came you up here, 'from the village'?" And anon you would catch a sniff of marsh grass and willow catkins — become for the moment a child again and weep copiously on finding yourself a diplomat.

It is an odd circumstance that the longer one lasts himself, the more he descants on the fleeting nature of all earthly things (reserving however always a corner of complacency for his own durability). I feel as if a little discourse tending this way might do you good by softening the membrane that covers the sentimental in your constitution, probably a little toughened by diplomacy and London life.

Where is Commencement? I — perhaps you — have found no worldly spectacle equal to that. Have you ever seen soldiery that impressed you with a sense of destructive power like the helmeted "Light Horse"? In any realm have you seen irresistible force so embodied as of yore in the C. L. I.[1] when they were in full uniform? You answer candidly, No! I am pleased. In navigation, have you met with any marine vehicle so profoundly typical of the dangers, distractions and devotions that hover over the deep as the Humane Society's Boat? Again you answer decidedly, No, and you are right. You never have. I have often seen the tear glisten in your eye as I described that craft making her way to the scene of disaster. I hope my story would not now be met with a jeer. What an inexpressible sort of calamity it would have been if the two philanthropists had perished by the leakiness of the H. S. boat. How almost impossible to enter on the records of the Society. Why did our band of humanitarians keep their boat so alienated from her element? I suppose the real truth is that they did not expect to avail in saving lives but only in searching for the dead.

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[1] Cambridge Light Infantry.

I find old Cambridge a very pleasant place to dwell in though I am rather imperfectly welded on to what I may call general society. We have all conveniences here for living and for dying. We have another Horse railroad — the Charles River; also another statue on the Common of "Bridge" one of the first settlers, whose descendant got leave from the town to put up this statue, and changed a portion of his silver — $5000 I believe — into bronze. Our people seem rather inclined to fall upon it. They seem to think it the safest way to impeach all our art in the first instance and condone afterward if cause is shown.

Do you recollect the virulence with which they used to attack the astronomical pudding which surmounts the Observatory, or at any rate the building, which is simply designed for use only and I presume has as much of good looks as they could afford to pay for.

The new "Bridge" is a personable man enough, wears the hat of Charles I's time, and by direction of the giver faces, say S. S. E., as if he were of a migratory turn and might wish to try farther down the coast. He is at the north end of the Common and near North Avenue.

So much for the convenience and adornment of life. On the other hand, if one is called on to lay down his fardel there can't be a better man than we have to take charge of any mortal relics he may wish to leave behind. I had been so pleased with his carriage on several mortuary occasions that in a moment of enthusiasm I told him that he should be my dust-man and thus unnecessarily raised the question of survival between us. He probably now discovers caducity in all my movements, and for my part I consider his constitution to be undermined by funereal chills.

We have n't had a club since you left us. I think I shall try to get up a three-cornered party, or possibly ask Henry Ware as fourth.

I shall make myself the attorney of C. and J. B. to send you their regards.

I wrote to Mrs. Lowell how warmly your name was received at Commencement. Colonel Lee says that I promised to send you a paper with an account of the doings. I suppose you saw the papers at the time, but I told him I should send a '*Tiser*, and I do so herewith. Do commend me kindly to Mrs. Lowell, to whom I wish all continuance of her present reported good health.

I have written a quantity of stuff to make a letter but on the same terms on which I have written before — positively no answer, if you had the leisure. All your friends are well to the best of my knowledge.

Mr. Darwin promised to carry you my remembrances. I like him much. I was pleased to receive a word of remembrance from Doctor Walcott.

To Miss E. Q. Swan

Cambridge, *August* 17, 1883.

I enjoyed sitting on my friend's piazza (West Rindge) perhaps more than at any time before, gazing often at Monadnock, who in turn looked at me in a rather benevolent manner. He is an amiable mountain, of cheerful temperament. He sometimes in the afternoon draws a purple handkerchief over his face, and takes a nap. He is very old, and needs it. When my two friends and I mustered amongst us, our two centuries or so, on the piazza, I thought I could perceive a complacent smile on his rugged face. But it might be an optical illusion.

I was pleased on my return to find a few staunch adherents of the Appian Way faithfully at their post. There is a local spirit growing up there tending to the aggrandizement of A. W. I share it, and advise occupants to say nothing depreciatory of it on any occasion. It is the most literary street in town, containing the annex,[1] — Mr. Wendell's Institution for the instruction of youth, — two Orientalists, and Philosophers in any quantity.

To George William Curtis

CAMBRIDGE, *October* 6, 1883.

DEAR SIR, —

(I own that this expression suggests a catholic feeling of intimacy as preceding acquaintance with the individual, but it gives a pleasant view of the probable relation of civilized man to man.)

You have long known F. D. F., and as I have learned from him have lately given him proof of your kindly remembrance. I am trying to get him into the "Aged Man's Home," in Boston, and a number of (civic) lions stand in the way. Through a friendly director, his name is admitted by the committee on applications, for presentment to the Directors (whose unanimous vote is necessary in his case, he not having resided in Boston during the ten years preceding his application). My friendly Director suggests the value of a letter from you, in F.'s favor, and without (of course) dictating the contents, he would like to have your testimony in the present rather than in the preterite tense, — as of a man you know rather than as of a man you have known — a friend of the present day rather than a friendly memory. Hard as F.'s case is, and though it seems like laughing at a funeral, this diversion of Machiavellism to a humane purpose gives me amusement in which I invite you to share as a casual, innocent profit resulting from an honest enterprise. But, if I have a long series of facts which to me constitute sufficient acquaintance with a man's character, I am not bound to consult the artistic sense of a dozen directors in drawing the perspective, and I should have no hesitation to vouch in Truth herself (of whom I believe there is no ideal figure — she does n't seem to have been a favorite) for the correctness of my sketch.

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[1] The so-called Harvard Annex or "Society for the Collegiate Instruction of Women," which became Radcliffe College, in 1894.

Then for eulogistic terms. Honesty (for instance) is absolute, admits neither enlargement nor diminution. But the silversmith, while he neither adds to the weight of his metal, nor subtracts from it, enlarges and adorns the surface, and so "a translucent honesty," "an aggressive honesty which abhors and jostles fraud," "a kindly honesty slow to see the impositions on itself," — if any of these, or other varieties from the same root, might work more effectually upon the toughened sympathies of an old director, I should not hesitate even to search the dictionary for amplifications. On the other hand if the Good Samaritan, upon no other acquaintance than a view of the victim after the assault, should say, "A particular friend of mine! Take good care of him, Landlord!" I should say that he had borrowed a trifle from Truth to lend her sister Charity! I say lend, as I have no doubt he would have explained afterward. If we can furnish such niceties as that would be for Conscience, in her most epicurean mood — I don't think we are like to go far wrong in using the means of persuasion in F.'s favor.

To pluck a man from an iceberg and place him in a warm bed, Sanford's Ginger within reach; to transport an old man from the cold solitude of Nebraska to a comfortable home where he can make his less hardy coevals hug the warmth by telling them how his beard froze to the bed last winter — Philanthropy so often subject to chills could attain to a healthy glow by only reflecting on such an ideal of comfort.

I am sure you will not mistake me as offering you instructions. I merely enlarge a little on the text of my Kindly Director.

I only wish to get as imposing a memoir and as much of your personal influence as the facts allow you to transmit.

If you will grant my request please direct to John Holmes, 5 Appian Way, Cambridge, Mass.

I am, Sir,
Your obt. Servt.

To J. R. Lowell

Cambridge, *November* 22, 1883.

Mon cher Ministre
Mein lieber Abgesandte, —

These two specimens must suffice to establish my polyglot ability. They are meant as a complimentary equivalent for your French.

I was (October 15) and am now much obliged for your kind letter. Your account of our ancient hotel is charming. I could put in the corner of the picture you have drawn, "Painted by J. R. L. after the greatest of the old masters, — Time."

For indeed you have reproduced most happily the work of that busy artist who is always at work, adding new touches to the benefit or damage of his sitters, but always beyond criticism.

Madame's *rhumatismes implacables*, the *aplomb* of Monsieur Garrier in executing his official duties, his *economie magistrale*, his tone *plus nasillard* with snuff and years, and his protest against the licence of the age, — not to omit *la bouillie* and *le petit vin rouge*, all go to replace me as locataire, and I feel an impulse to demand my key from poor perennial Mlle. I am pleased with Mons. Garrier's expression "*pour le principe de l'Autorité*"; an Anglican or American methinks would say "have nowadays no respect for authority," and omit the more philosophical "le principe."

Le principe as represented by the gallows, wheel, etc., was undoubtedly much respected in old times.

I thank you for the portraits of the two new *garçons* and the suggestion of the casual *abbé*.

I accept cordially your idea of Mons. G. as the *lien musculaire* between the twin hotels.

They were at work on the enlargement which has set Mlle. free from her little cage, when I was the wretched prisoner of 1880.

I should think you would feel ten thousand miles away from Old Cambridge with so long a total change of ideas and habits. But you have had a great time of it; and don't let me forget to say that I enjoyed your Fielding [1] speech ever so much. I hope you have been *berührt* to your heart's content. I am much pleased that you should recall me pleasantly in No. 2 *au premier*, which I presume was my room (on the left at the head of the stairs). Yes, I am much pleased when you have had so much to drive me out of your head. Well, I can assure you, you are not forgotten here (in your private capacity as friend; of course you are constantly before us as a public man).

You once wrote as if your (naturalized) fellow citizens here might owe you a grudge, but I never heard a word tending that way — perhaps you only spoke in the way of pleasantry.

Since you left Cambridge, Time has sent (how many) say, six of his squadrons to attack me personally, each composed of 365 members aged 24 each. Don't you suppose that I look pretty well battered? They tell me you hold your own most potentially. You have my approbation.

Give my love to Mrs. Lowell, and thank her for her kind greeting and return mine of the most cordial quality; and I am

Your old friend.

P.S. Hail! my Lord Rector! [2]

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[1] Address at Taunton, England, September 4, 1883.

[2] Lowell had just been elected Lord Rector of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

In the next letter, written to the ten-year-old son of his nephew, Mr. Holmes revives our old friend, the sailor-man, Goliath Tittle; and assuredly he has lost none of his drollery during the intervening years.

TO EDWARD J. HOLMES, JR.

December 2, 1883
OFF JEDDO, JAPAN.

MY DEAR NEDDY, —

I hain't never seen you but then I knowed your father so well ever since he was Knee high to a toad that its all the same and I haint seen him for a good while cos what little Ive ben ashore I haint skerce ever had store cloaths on which I should n't want to go for to see him without em on cos hes one er them that likes to see things ship shape and trig like tho he aint no kind of a man neither to find fault with a feller if he aint quite up to Oak Hall [1] and the fashnables. Then havin been tattooed by two three different lots of Kanakey who had different ways er doin of it, makes it kind er awkward goin inter S'siety as they call it Ef I shud tell you what kind er offer I had at a dime museum in New York it ward astonish you

I should like to have you tell your pa that Ive bin thru quite a number of xperences since I see him, er navigatin most part er the time when I warnt cast ashore or on a raft or something and once pickt up swimmin by the Seven Sisters brigantine in Latitude 54 South nigh Crossbones Island which was about as narrer a chance as Ive hed, onless among the Kenniballs which was 7th July 1853 11 oclock in the mornin sea time as near as I can make it when I knowd the hour (I wont say the minnit) high noon, which is their dinnertime, allowin alwys as they do a hour for roastin, when I was sure to be gone up, which is a situation pretty hard for a feller to home in Boston to take in. for a feller to be in such fustrate condition, and kinder coaxed and made a good deal of and fed up and enjoyin hisself well on oranges and bananys and rice, and sometimes roast pig and then to find out as I did that mornin what it was all for. I tell you a feast dont look very pleasant when a fellers a goin to be the pervisions Lucky for me they almost all of em got down in the little holler-valley, like, where the hot springs be which they might be intendin to do some bilin by way of variety. I was tied to a tree no great way off higher up and a tryen as I might be to set up the backstays of my catechism and get together what religion I remembered and there come the thunderationest rumbling and roarin that ever I did heer and I see the lot ofem down below kinder hove up like, and then down went the whole kit on em and there wusnt nothing but hot water for to be seen where they was a minnit afore and they was biled insted er me Somewhat they was left on em which wasnt many untied me a thinkin that their god Chow which was the head of the feast was offended with them or partial to me or somethin and after that they treated me real polite; and I come away in the Ben Folger which see my signals and some on em cried when I left but I guess it was more for what they had missed than any fection for me

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[1] Then a much advertised emporium of ready-made clothing in Boston.

I will say so much for the Kenniballs, they do know how to lay the fat on a feller and theyre pretty civil well dispersitioned sort of creeters too only for the way they have of eatin their friends for a windup. If it wornt for that theyre better behaved than some of our folks.

Well I should spin a dredful long yarn if I was to tell all the kind er fancy times Ive had since I see your pa such as bein cast ashore in the Straits of Magellan and nothin but a hambone which I drew by lot for ten days which I eat it all up before I had done with it, and was taken off by the Schooner Ann Jane Capten Bulge which you may have heern of as he sed he had relations livin in Cambridge Port. Ive been most everywhere and seen most everything sea sarpent encluded and had a most everything folks has in the way of voilent complaints pertiklerly kolery plague yeller fever and fever and ager, but Ive a notion that such things kind er clear off er fellers constitution for Im fust rate now. I ris 250 easy the last time I was wayd and stand 6 foot 2 which my brothers is all small which I spose was becos the folks put tucks into their trousers they was so everlastin afraid they'd take a sudden start which they never did but was uncommon slow growers Now they never put none in mine and I didnt find no difficulty en growin. Ive been married quite a number of times but it was agin my will, amongst the natives, for they didnt give me no choice, and they kind er dopted me Do ask your grandpa the Doctor what he thinks of Mrs. Liddy Pinkhams Vegetable Compound. Ive bet a dollar with Solomon Twister 2d mate of the clipper Thunder and Lightnin that he'll say its fust rate. Sol sez the reglar doctors dont like sich things cos they hurt their bizness. Her picter which I spose must be a good likeness is enough for me she looks so sensible like and as ef she had a good judgment. Sol takes her stuff by way of pervention he ses a stitch in time saves nine.

Tell your pa I want to see him ever so much, and I hope to when I come home. Im gittin considble along now — I guess I shall quit the seas putty soon, an if I could live somewhere near your pa I guess we could enjoy considable for there aint no part of the world but I could tell him about, and then take you on my knee if you haint got too old. And perhaps your ma wouldnt mind bearin a hand in the conversation it would be fust rate Ive changed my name to Little and when folks ask if I got a act for it I tell em the act was passed by the

Legislater of Patagonya for it was down there I changed it.

Love to Father Yours
Sarvice to Mother GOLIAH LITTLE

Sol ses your grandpa is a Homopath[1]—You ask your father to ask him ef he is — if youre a mind to, and tell me when you write These here two little dollars is made outer gold I digged in Californy Ive salted down some too If you sh'd care for to write me a letter please to send it to Portland Oregon I xpect to be there in about two months.

TO DR. C. E. WARE

CAMBRIDGE, *September* 20, 1884.

I might very properly have written to you before this time, but my meagre record has offered me no temptation to do so.

I have, wherever I have been, lived in the very quietest manner, and at home have even rather improved in that respect on my habits abroad. The chief social pleasure here now is for the returning fugitives to ask and tell each other where they have been and what they have been about. For my part, on leaving you August 2nd, I stayed at Princeton until August 16th, then was at home to August 23rd, then at Mattapoisett a week, since then have been a fixed fact in Cambridge except two

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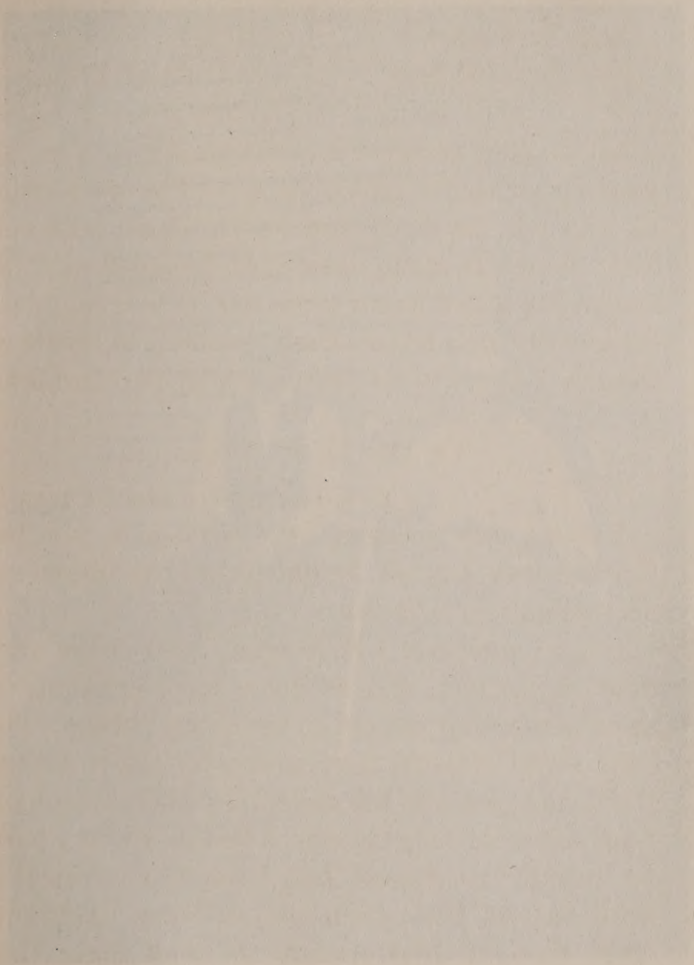
[1] A playful allusion to Dr. O. W. Holmes's vehement denunciation of homœopathy.



JOHN HOLMES AS A "FARMER"

days at Brookline. At Princeton I was, as with you, on a farm, and everything went on so well under my inspection, that if I had stayed long enough I stood a chance to be chosen President of the local Agricultural Society.

It may be well for me, the practical farmer (you know in the old field at home), to record my appreciation of the hospitality of both the amateur farmers at *West Rindge* and *Princeton.*

Why cannot you send me a little account of your experiences since I left you. I love to read your reports on the farm; with the information about crops, larches and chestnut trees (the plantation) — vagabond and predatory insects — chickens with dislocated thighs, who arrive in the world only to ask for surgical aid, demented birds that lay their eggs on rocks in the pasture; mosquitoes, whether in force this season or perhaps discouraged by the weather and in subdued frame of mind, or possibly even repentant; that, however, is hardly to be hoped, the mosquito has as meagre a moral temperament as can be found, and therefore makes a terrible combination of the sanguinary and the frivolous.

Do write me. I enjoy the picture of your well-earned repose varied with just exertion enough to give it a flavor. I will say, too, that your letters always read well. Come on then! Give us a letter, a historical letter. I delight in Mary's photograph, which arrests us three old gents in our pleasantest social attitude. My love to her. Give my kindest regards to Mrs. W. the general benefactress. I should like to see her make one holiday exclusively for the benefit of the wife of Dr. W., but it would be hardly a possibility. Now come on! All that you want is a cent's worth of paper — ditto ink — and a pen, and a good-will to act, resulting from my request and your own benevolence. Come on!

Yours affectionately.

Mr. Holmes sometimes amused himself by sending verses to his correspondents. The following is one of the best specimens.

SITTING FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPH

Dear Doctor Ham, —

I hope you have not yet said —
A very very naughty word
And sure in heaven to be heard.

. . . .

I bring you, to admire or laugh
The long long promised photograph.
If aught extravagant you see,
Credit it not I beg to me —
The Photog, sovereign of the hour,
Fashioned my looks with tyrant power,
Bade me, as each device he tried,
Or sweetly smile or swell with pride.
Now think of martyrs calm and pale,
Now of Suwarrow and Ismail;
Now take a lively aspect on,
Now the grave look of Fénélon;
Now bade me think of bygone sages,
If then too grave, on Dickens' pages;

And while at something vague I aimed,
Compound of all that he had named,
Came the sharp "Now!" and petrified
I sat until he drew the slide.
What wonder then that now you see
A curious anomaly.

To Miss Sarah Palfrey

No. 5 Appian Way, *May* 5, 1885.

My dear Miss Sarah, —

Please not to impute my delay in reply to indifference; much less to deliberate neglect of your note.

But I really could not muster an answer at once.

Your somewhat abrupt, and in its nature, startling announcement of the suicide committed in your presence, perhaps gave me some tendency to nervous prostration. I was flat on my back, as the phrase is, for quite a number of hours. Yes, during a considerable part of yesterday and today.

Wednesday afternoon. Today I have been afflicted with epistolary prostration from which I am just now rallying.

Later. I have just found out what makes me so very slow with my answer. It is my reluctance to tell you that I can't possibly undertake what you would have me.

If you want a regular martyr, the real historical thing, and will get the consent of the authorities, and provide stake and fuel, I don't say but that I will serve, and even bear a rateable portion of the expense; and taking it as the alternative to the other service, I think you would hear a pretty loud and cheerful *Nunc dimittis* from out of the combustion. You shall choose what I am to be Martyr for. Call it Philanthropy or the Cause of Education or Woman Suffrage — Just what you please. I shall come over soon to see you about it.

I love Philanthropy; but better when she takes her constitutional in the Common than when she calls on business at No. 5 A.W. I love Philanthropists, and am far from owing you the least grudge that you demand of me what it might be very meritorious for me to perform, and you must bear me none that I decline.

Please convey my respects to my contemporary, your Mother.

With much regard,

Yours.

To C. W. Storey

Cambridge, *May* 13, 1885.

I am happy to tell you that I arrived safely at a little before 10. Mariana's suggestion of the tidal wave weighed somewhat on my mind when I reached Boston, and I thought it prudent to consult a sage who cultivates weather exclusively. I told him I had a moral doubt whether I ought to go by West Boston Bridge or round by Charlestown. He said there was no danger before 12 o'clock. If there were, said he, "I should not be here." (He occupies a suite of rooms in the back part of the old

Toll house.) So I came — keeping an eye out to windward however, and internally estimating the buoyancy or otherwise of my valise, from which I resolved not to part unless strangulation threatened or Philanthropy shrieked a shrill demand on my exertions. We got over nicely and my self-complacency tells me there might have been a considerable crowd of friends at the end of the bridge to welcome me but for the lateness of the hour.

This is my simple narrative. . . .

To Dr. C. E. Ware

Cambridge, *July* 15, 1885.

My foot is in the Stirrup — but no steed belongs to me.
The expression's therefore figurative — as you must plainly see.
As light as wheels the balanced gate upon its wonted hinge,
So readily I turn my face to well-beloved West Rindge.
I shall leave behind a desert — 'tis sad for me to say,
But desolate at present is our brilliant Appian Way.
The Annex has all vanished — our neighbors too have fled,
In pretended cooler shades — to seek rest for hand and head;
And few and slow the steps are heard — of patriots who maintain
That to leave our street for any place can never be to gain.

Brother Poet, I find this measure rather rough; let's try another.

'T was thou, infected with poetic fire,
Who first took up the free and easy lyre,
And wrote me pleasantly and all at ease,
In measure we may call "go as you please."

And now thou seest what thy example's done:
Behold two bards, where late was only one.
Now I too know what means "poetic *strain*,"
Nor wilt thou catch me soon at this again.

Charles! It's delightful to be on good solid prose ground again. I feel as if I had climbed with toil and peril down from some high place.

If you, Charles, were not a native and "free of the guild," I would send you "The freedom of the city in a box," which last, taken by itself, is about as funny a sober expression as you will find, considering the irrepressible expansive character of Freedom, and the small limits proposed to her.

But we must not stop to moralize. . . .

To C. W. Storey

Cambridge, *October* 8, 1885.

I am quite dazzled with your schedule of pears, and anonymous demi. He who plays on words — a habit to be avoided — might say, demi if I ain't.

Visions of bag stuffing arise in my mind. My bag is my Aladdin's carpet. I stuff it, and get on or nearly on it, and presto, I find myself in Brookline with the last style of patriotic cigar in my hand, and an Aladdin's jug spontaneous in coming, and nearly the same in exuding at my elbow.

Parasangs! You are right. Twenty parasangs meant a good breakfast on mule meat. Five parasangs, with a river every two miles, and a mountain the third, meant a half pint of bran, and a pint of water —

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *September* 6, 1886.

My dear little Mary, —

(For I am surely entitled to use this diminutive to one whom I have had under my eye ever since she chipped the shell, speaking as an old agriculturist.)

My dear little Mary, —

I am ever so much pleased with your lively letter received today. I can almost hear the splash in the tub of Wat in the last purification, and I take an honest pride in every flea that rises self-convicted to the surface. He has been the unwilling protector and nurse of a colony whose expulsion gives him a well-earned pleasure, though possibly accompanied by a homesick feeling at seeing so many old neighbors set adrift.

If your dog knows fleas by sight (which is probable) he must have experienced deep emotions (after his bath) in viewing the surface of the water when he had emerged. To see so many old tenants who had committed perpetual waste and in fact drawn salaries, instead of paying rent! Wat must have looked a ray or two more cheerful than usual. I think his general expression is decidedly stoic.

Tuesday, September 7th.

I have to go to Boston and wish to send this today. No, I will keep it and fill it up.

I do not wonder that you doubt about directing your letter. . . . . I have promised Waldo to return to his house on Thursday of this week. I have not cared to go out to drive, but have sat on the piazza and cultivated my mind. We had some reading aloud. Mrs. C. and a young man by name J. P. were the visitors when I arrived on the 26th. They went on Wednesday, September 1st, and Miss A. H. came the same day. She read aloud "Castle Rackrent" the first evening and the "Knapsack" the second. I shall trust your knowledge of juvenile literature to tell you whence these come. So you see it was a sort of relaxation for a mind that had been strained to such a degree to take in Lecky.

Tuesday afternoon.

I have been to B—— and on returning find a letter from your honored papa. Now this makes a complication. A lively, yes, a gay letter from the papa, who is naturally in high spirits because he has got back a dollar that looked quite doubtful (remind him that twenty-five cents remains due). It is an intensely difficult situation —I hardly know what to do — I have a strong tendency to write to your papa, across you, but that won't do. I think I will leave the papa and answer him bye and bye, but it has quite upset me. I want to talk to you about the potatoes, and the rye, and the chestnuts, but I must hold off. Now we will begin again with the decks all clear.

I expect to go down on Thursday to Cohasset and to find the Misses C. whom I have never seen. I hope to show them something of the manners of the "gentleman of the old school" such as, "Your servant, young madam," and the like.

When I went to B—— yesterday I saw the labor procession which was very long and drew a great crowd along their route. We shall hear this evening how they improved their holiday. Today I found the sidewalks well filled near the newspaper offices — where (especially at the *Herald*) (there were telegrams of the race, *Mayflower* so much ahead at 11-½).[1]

Cambridge has been quite a desert, bears running about the Common and panthers watching for the Observatory folks in case they should come out of doors. . . . I shall try to write to you again before you come down and give you a better narrative, if I find there is material to improve your mind or perhaps to rest it after your perusal of Lecky.

Affectionately.

Wat says:

"Come on Dr. Ware! Come on if you please.
If you'll furnish water, I'll furnish fleas."

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[1] The International Yacht Race in which the American yacht *Mayflower* beat the English yacht *Galatea.*

To Mrs. Joseph G. Thorp

March 4, 1887.

My dear Mrs. Thorp, —

I thank you for your kind invitation and for your pleasant assertion that it would give yourself and Mr. Thorp pleasure to receive me; but I fear you are mistaken. I am not the least of a dining-out man.

When I think however that I volunteered to act as patrol of your district, the old stern voice of military discipline seems to say, "They are calling in the outposts. Obey orders," — and under such an impulse I *must* afford to disappoint any idea you may have entertained of my being eligible dinner company.

And now it grieves me to have to mingle the discordant tone of rebuke with my thanks. It is very true that I admitted you (*auctoritate mihi commissa*) to a recognized standing as of the genuine Old Cambridge stock. I had no idea however that you would think, upon such title, to enroll yourself among the "Old inhabitants of Cambridge." I must tell you that this drew from me the involuntary exclamation, "The little whipper-snapper!" which conveys perhaps sufficient reproof. I may feel obliged to report you to our "Sanhedrim" — for disrespect; but if so, shall plead your youth; you need fear nothing too harsh from them.

I may not have told you that I am a veteran of the Harvard Washington Corps.[1] I mention it to account for my military tone above.

Notwithstanding the rebuke which my duty to my "Order" rendered compulsory,

I subscribe myself
Your grateful respondent.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *August* 17, 1887.

My dear Miss, —

I returned from Brookline yesterday afternoon and found on my table a piece of photographic art which I at once attributed to you. Two of the figures in it were familiar and came gratefully back on my recollection. The third, whose expression indicated that he had recently indulged in a dose of rough-on-rats, or something of that sort, attracted my sympathy but failed to awake recognition. Whoever he may be, methinks he would have done better to have contented himself with the one original copy of his countenance.

The two other figures are rendered very successfully indeed; and I am far from impeaching the fidelity of the first. I thank you much for your present. I should advise the third gentleman to hold a rose in his mouth during the process. (Here you see the impression of that countenance rushes on me again.)

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[1] A frolicsome organization of undergraduates which flourished when Holmes was at Harvard.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *November* 28, 1888.

My dear Mary, —

It would be presumption in a young inexperienced scribbler to suppose you in an urgent hurry for his verses. So much for my delay in sending them.

How have you and your mama weathered this prodigious northeaster? I trust well; with the mimic Ocean under your windows you have been almost at sea. I should not wonder if you had unconsciously ejaculated, "Belay! Hard-a-port!" and the like. The storm stood on no ceremony here, but took possession of Appian Way without a "by your leave" or any other civility, and waltzed up and down and turned somersaults and ramped about with a demoniac rapture. You could hear his wild shriek of delight when a hat sailed off to the Rocky Mountains, or an umbrella blew out straight and became all outside to its owner (should n't you in such a case abandon the umbrella and fly with all speed from public opinion, which I never knew to have any mercy on a *man*, at least, with an inside-out umbrella). The best of men and of women who witness such a catastrophe are transformed into a mild, very mild, species of demon. You ask how so? Why! because they laugh at what is for the moment an inexpressible and almost unintelligible calamity to a fellow-being. I never saw a person in such a situation whose countenance did not bear a truly ghastly expression of grief and bewilderment. My dear Mary, I hope that your umbrella may never, never, turn inside out. If it does, let me counsel you not to lose a second in staring at the elongated phenomenon in your hand. It is that second when the public has you. No! Toss that nightmare type of uselessness contemptuously into the gutter. *Abi! Evade! Rumpe!* Or, go it! Cut and run! . . .

My sense of economy has made me fill up my paper as you see. I hope my advice may be of service to you. I trust it will not be oppressive. Give my kindest regards to your mama and allow me to sign myself

Very cordially your old friend.

CLASS DINNER

Seven weary pilgrims, old and gray,
We rest upon our lengthening way
And think how portly first began
Our now so dwindled caravan.

Again the funeral bier doth cast
Its shadow dark on our repast;
For e'en upon our festal eve
A comrade dear hath ta'en his leave.

One greeting now must be foreborne,
One more warm handgrip now is gone;
We can but view his empty chair
And try to think we see him there.

And so with all we've left behind,
Though various classmates of one mind,
We summon them to reappear;
They do! Behold, we see them here.

Hark! Humphrey's lusty song again,
With a new softness in the strain.
And Hark again! the vollied laugh
Subdued and lessened to its half.

And as we say 't is '32,
They softly vanish from our view.
No! 'T is no longer '32
With life and heart and all things new.

Time's iron tongue says '88,
The sun is low, 't is getting late,
And all the signs do now portend
The coming of our journey's end.

Then cheerly hail the mild decay
That bodes the breaking of new day;
Or, if you will, the fading light
That tells of long and restful night.

(*Fragment, December 5, 1888*)

The world has borne something of a Day and Martin hue, without the admirable shine proceeding from that article.

I have knocked about, however, within narrow limits in as rowdy a manner as my age permits, and have tried to unite a juvenile gaiety with senile toughness.

The Harvard boys were mightily tickled with their rare victory at football.

To C. W. Storey

January 4, 1889.

The Christmas time I have had "beggars description." In thinking of this phrase I have some difficulty in seeing how "description" could really be beggared, unless delineation or analysis, or some such rival activity, should really fall upon him, and with or without unnecessary violence rob him of all his exaggerations, aggravations, tinsel ornaments, in fact of all his properties, and leave him nothing but the skeleton Truth, with no means of padding, etc., to fit it for the public gaze.

It must be a Shakespeare phrase, I think. I leave you to struggle with it. It is very handy, anyhow — "Beggars description!" Two words, and all is said, and somehow a very impressive impression left on the mind.

But you observe that almost always immediately after announcing descriptions, beggary, bankruptcy and destitution, even to a want of decent clothing, they trot him out and make him show his paces before the public — which is something I don't quite understand. I said that the time I have had beggars description. I, therefore, shall not describe it.

Somehow or other Christmas, though I staid in my room all that day, does n't allow you any rest, what with one thing and another.

I feel as if I had just returned from a tour on foot to the Rocky Mountains. I hope you have been well and have enjoyed at least average Christmas happiness.

The world as I see it about me appears too distracted with sendings and receivings and answerings to enjoy any peaceful satisfaction. It seems a time of mild benevolent delirium in which people babble of cards and toys as our friend F. did of green fields.

Yours affectionately.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *January* 15, 1889.

I can't do better than to fulfill my promise to write while you are yet a newcomer in Asheville. The little fishes that were wont to swim around by Brimmer Street and turn an eye up to you at the window, are much perplexed, and miss you a great deal. A little flounder told a clam, who was taken and brought to our fish shop, and who told it to a canary in the shop, who somehow sent word of it to Miss Tolman's birds, who told her, who told me, that he was real "mis'ble." "If she don't come back pretty soon," he said, "I am goin' to move to Chelsea. I did want to see the Brookline Street bridge finished, but I can't stan' it here nohow if she don't come back to the winder in the course of another week."

So you see that when a nice girl like yourself darts off to foreign parts, she hits right and left and downward. I want you to send your kind remembrances to the little fish and I will get them to him by some of the creatures.

Of course if this little fellow feels so badly, you must have left behind you tribes of regretful friends to write you long and loving letters.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *April* 18, 1889.

. . . The little fish that I told you of continued to droop after I wrote you — would say nothing but "I am real mis'ble" — and try to drown himself by jumping out of the water on to a stone, but an old crab (whom I perhaps mentioned before) — a friend of the family — shoved him in again and made him promise not to repeat the act. The poor little fellow said, "I won't, but I am real mis'ble." There was a North Carolina fish got carried up to Boston lately by a current occasioned by storms. Some of his relatives or friends in the river there, had heard of you through a trout that had seen you walking by his brook, and had heard you say to yourself out loud, "I shall go home now very soon." The stranger fish pitied the little one and told him of this. The little one said, "Jingo" and jumped three inches perpendicular out of the water, and has been gay as a lark ever since. I tell you all this because I knew you felt for the little sentimental fish. . . .

The weather is very moderate, temperature high for the date — but of course there is the old east wind. Temper him as you will, he is always the same surly old fellow — rheumatic and cross.

P.S. You are not obliged to read these outlying scraps, they are only meant to make the letter look plump and hearty.

"Though far and wide thou stray,
Forget not Boston Bay."
POPE.

P.S. Trite reflection. It is worth going away to have the pleasure of coming home. It is worth staying at home to avoid the bother of going away. (This is what we call a well-balanced reflection.)

"Remember thy friends
Forget thine enemies
Forget NOT thine India rubbers."
LORD BACON.

CHAPTER VII

LAST DAYS

John Holmes was now an old man. His infirmities increased, especially the dimness of sight, which at last prevented him from reading at all, although he still wrote letters in an almost undecipherable hand, which he himself could not see. He still crawled out of an evening, when lameness permitted, and called on near-by friends. A little group of his well-wishers took turns in reading to him. He often suffered from fits of depression, as well he might, but his native buoyancy would reassert itself and he now made it a duty to appear cheerful, even when his spirits were low.

His affection for his intimates increased and with them he loved to keep up, so far as possible, his old ways. In his correspondence with Miss Mary L. Ware, for instance, he carried on the whimsical story of the Little Fish through many letters. As long as he went out he paid particular attention to the children and grandchildren of persons whom he had played with in their own childhood. He usually had a supply of new, shiny dimes and quarters which he distributed among the little people. He told droll stories and made them feel that he was one of them.

But besides the inevitable decrepitude which blights old age, he had to bear the loss of friends who died before him. Robert Carter was the first, followed by Henry Ware, Estes Howe, and Waldo Higginson. During more than a year Lowell was stricken by a painful illness, the nature of which was not generally known, and after delusive rallies, he died, on August 12, 1891. By dint of great effort he made out to attend one more meeting of the Whist Club, which had suspended its activity for a long time past. After his death John Holmes clung all the more affectionately to the two or three survivors.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *July* 2, 1889.

My dear Mary, —

I believe my last letter (to your mama and you) had the merit of being juvenile enough in style for anybody. Tonight I shall find it easy to assume the gravity of age. For walking in the procession on Commencement Day tired my knee a little and I have kept in-doors today. This is enough to make an "old gent" realize the emptiness of life — the vanity of human wishes, the frailty of the human structure, and anything else that the earnest and melancholic moralizer should suggest for his acceptance. To all his solemn propositions I should tonight answer, "Yea! Verily!" in a tone that would vouch my sincerity.

But I must rouse myself— I must say to Despond-

JOHN HOLMES

[illegible] of age, he had to bear the loss of friends who died before him; Robert Carter was the first, followed by [illegible], [illegible], and [illegible]. During more than a year Lowell was stricken by a painful illness, the nature of which was not generally known, and after [illegible] he died on August 12, 1891. By dint of great effort he made [illegible] last meeting of the [illegible] activity for a [illegible]

[illegible]

To [illegible]

[illegible], 1891.

My dear Mary,

I believe my last letter (to your [illegible]) had the merit of being juvenile enough in style for anybody. To-night I shall find it easy to assume the gravity of age. For walking in the procession on Commencement Day tired my knee a little and I have kept in-doors [illegible]. This is enough to make an "old goat" realize the conditions of life,—the vanity of human wishes, the frailty of the human structure, and anything else that the copybook and melancholic moralists should suggest [illegible]. To all his solemn suggestions I [illegible] answer, [illegible]

[illegible]

ency and Dreariness — who have made me a visit today, Come, girls, it is too late for you to be out — go home to your cypress grove! and tell your mama (old Madame Melancholy) that I hope she will always be as happy as I have been today.

Wednesday, July 3rd.

I wish that I could today find something better than my experiences to talk of. So! Let us see. There is Commencement — I did not mean to go to it or any part of it, but going to see Mr. Boott (that is the right spelling, is it? Yes, I have looked in the College Catalogue) he said he was going over to old Massachusetts to vote for Overseers — I said I would go too — and once over there — in contact with all the circumstances and association of Commencement, I determined to go to the dinner (having already omitted the exercises, so-called, at Memorial Hall). So in a short time I was changed from the morose hermit into quite a lively old gent, marching to military music as if I had been a soldier all my life. I found myself well on toward the head of the procession, with but three classmates, Dwight, Dupee, and Cushing. Almost all in my neighborhood were either scalped (i.e. bald) or bleached "white unto the harvest." The young fellows outside the procession cheered the old gents (and young, too, I suppose), and what with the music and all, we felt like Ulysses and Nestor and other well-advanced old Greek gentlemen returning from the conquest of Troy. The only object of attack before us was the dinner, which they fell upon with glorious aplomb. And I, pretending to two meals a day, was carried away by the general enthusiasm and did good execution.

We did not get very near the middle of the hall, so that when the speaking came there was a surprising apathy on the part of the old gents — nothing stirred them up in the least. But being somewhat deaf, myself, I soon saw the reason. I applauded occasionally with enthusiasm, which was so much the more to the honor of the speaker, as it was done on credit, and showed my confidence in his ability. This somewhat relieved the aspect of entire indifference which prevailed around me. The walk was a little too long for me and is the cause of my staying at home yesterday and today.

Then I went to Phi Beta Kappa, and again found myself well ahead in the procession, illustrating the effect of Time, which had thus promoted me. Again military music, and again Age putting his best foot forward and winking out of sight the obtrusive years. I escaped all the walking I could. I found myself in the procession with John Dwight and Waldo. At the dinner with them and Colonel Harry Lee, so that I had a very nice time and I was able to applaud more intelligently than the day before.

I tell you all this because I have nothing better, and also with the idea that when one is a little remote, if I may so term it, quantity quite competes with quality.

On Class Day I was furnished with tickets and went at eight in the evening to Sanders Theatre to see the dancing, but soon wearied of it, went into the College Yard to see the arrangements, soon wearied and retired. I did not feel gay as a man, but in fine feather as a Philosopher, ready to decry all sorts of vain amusements. . . . All the folk who are going to stay here say that Cambridge looks its best and pity the exiles.

Our horse cars, as you have heard said a thousand times, are a great luxury to people not too exacting; and our electric cars begin to bounce along in a hilarious way. My landlady has the prettiest kitten, perhaps, in Massachusetts; amiable, lively, intelligent. She has found out that I am writing to you and says, "Please, sir, tell Miss Ware that I am quite content with the world so far as I have seen it, and glad she is better and send my humble regards."

Yours truly.

To Mrs. John G. Palfrey

Cambridge, *February* 5, 1890.

My dear Mrs. Palfrey, —

I hope to appear before you soon with my gloves buttoned[1] which they perhaps never yet were (both at a time); or if ever, — phenomenally.

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[1] Evidently acknowledging the present of a glove-buttoner.

I shall hope then to see a smile of benevolent self-satisfaction on your countenance, and that all of us present shall be, as the phrase is, "visibly affected."

I shall hope also to have the pleasure of thanking you for your useful present, and for a youthful feeling approaching the boyish, which I have in thus learning some of the rudimentary traits of social life.

And I subscribe myself somewhat bashfully
With kindest regards
Your Contemporary.

To J. R. Lowell

No. 5 Appian Way,
April 7th, 1890.

I am delighted to think that you are now enjoying some, and I hope, a great deal, of comfort. "The Judge" [1] and Wendell, and Charles Storey have reported you to me and the last account is the best one — that you are downstairs, and at home again in your room, with all your authors in full conclave about you.

Don't wonder that you have not seen me among the gratulants. I am congratulating myself instead of you and hope very soon to come up and amuse you by explaining how I have been so tied to home lately.

So, go on and thrive and get back to the *locus* (*a*) *quo*. You love a bit of Law Latin I know. It is a favorite part of the Law with me. There seems more and heavier law in the same amount of Latin than of English.

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[1] Judge E. R. Hoar.

Remember me kindly to Mabel, who I hope keeps you company in getting well.

To Miss M. L. Ware

July 22, 1890.

My dear Mary, —

When I wrote you last a letter with but very little in it, I was expecting to improve somewhat on myself in another letter to be despatched a few days after, and now my date is July 22nd. I can hardly tell myself how it should be so, unless it is that old gents easily find insuperable difficulties.

I have been through the usual summer course of events — as spectator, not actor. I have seen the little Cambridge gaieties of the last term, and have felt in a feeble degree the excitement attending the excitement of the world about me, but generally have maintained a gravity proportionate to the hilarity of the public. I have been to time-honored Commencement and Phi Beta Kappa, and possibly have relaxed on those occasions into a serious smile. After both these occasions I brought home with me to No. 5 Appian Way three or four friends and supplied them with a fluid more stimulating than the coffee and cold tea on which the College feeds its young at these times. Wentworth Higginson presided at the Phi Beta Kappa and very handsomely — bringing the house down with his happy allusions.

Your Uncle Harry[1] made a nice speech commemorating, among others, one of my classmates whom he knew more intimately than I did. I did not go out on Class Day, but it was a great occasion for the young folks. The "spreads" were numerous and the whole thing was multitudinous and musical, eloquent, saltatory, sentimental according to the moment or the person emergent on the scene. I looked on in fancy and approved, but I fear did not smile. It was enough for a philosopher to give his approval.

I have called with great steadiness on Miss L and M, and now and then on Miss C and A (I write the one Miss for the two). The latter have become entirely re-naturalized in Cambridge. On Sunday I go with much regularity to "meeting," though not hearing so well as might be. . . . After meeting I usually find a companion for a short walk, Professor Torrey,[2] say, or Professor Thayer, and frequently moralize on the quiet and order of the day, and that in a land, too, where Peace, in her white gown and a flower in her bosom, walks at large undisturbed by war-like drum or trumpet.

My landlady has cat and kittens to the number of five. When I return home I am likely to review this family. One cat is an Angora and she has a good deal of sentiment. She has heard of your being ill and she said to me the other day, "I feel real bad about Miss Mary and I wish you would tell her so. But you tell her to cheer up, I was real sick myself once and they kept telling me to cheer up, and I kept cheering up and at last all of a sudding I got better than I was before I got sick." I told her I would send her message.

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[1] Colonel Henry Lee, Harvard A.B. 1836; died 1898.

[2] Henry Warren Torrey, Harvard A.B. 1833, Professor Emeritus of History at Harvard; died 1893.

I have got into such a contracted old gent way of life that going to Boston is an event with me, and I can't help speaking of it as going to the "Metropolis" — and — on the whole, don't you yourself think it is more proper? It is no small excursion when you think of it. It includes running the gauntlet through all sorts of difficulties. The other day I found myself between an electric and a horse-car. But there was room enough for existence. I gave the most searching and serious look I was capable of at the conductor of the electric, as if to say, "You are responsible." He was evidently affected, and would have shed tears if he had had time; and I came out comfortably. I go to comfort your little friend the fish now and then, but it is painful. The last visit I made him was near your house where he was waiting as usual. "Ain't she coming home? When is she coming home? Why don't she come home?" These questions all in a string uttered in a plaintive tone moved me very much. I told him you were better and would be back soon. "Hoorar," he said in his small voice, "I will swim right over to Chelsea and tell Uncle Pollock," and his little fins twinkled as he departed.

If you don't decline to answer this tardy letter, do tell me what you would like best to have me tell you about, if I can interest or please with any of the small material I have at hand.

Your old friend.

To Miss M. L. Ware

September 2, 1890.

I have been to see your little friend the fish lately. After I had said a few words to him in a fatherly way, he broke out in a vivacious tone, "Why, you seem a little dumpish, Mr. Holmes!"

"Where did you get that word?" said I.

"We use it down here in the river. Mrs. Salmon uses it, — and she says it's proper, and she's a good deal of a lady. You ought to see her in her best dress! She's real splendid."

"Well," said I, "how have you come on since I saw you?"

"First-rate! Splendid! I have had the biggest time this summer I ever had in my life. I have been to all the fashionable places, over to South Boston and round to Chelsea, and once I followed the steamboat clear down to Nantasket. Ain't it splendid down there? And it 's so fashionable and gay! I almost wanted to go ashore, but Uncle Haddock (he went with me) he said, 'What could you do ashore?' And he laughed so, and opened his great mouth as if he was going to swallow me, and he keeps saying every now and then, when I meet him, 'Don't you want to go ashore?' and opens his mouth a foot wide and laughs."

"Then you have not been solitary," said I.

"Solitary," said he, "I guess so with such an everlasting lot of relations as I have got. Some of them pretty hard ones, too. There is Aunt Eel, she is dreadful fond of her relations, but them that goes to see her is apt to be pretty slow about coming home agin. She is too fond of 'em altogether, so Uncle Haddock says. He ain't afraid of her, he is so big — But — " and he started suddenly, "how is Miss Mary? I have not heard from her for ever so long, and I feel real down about it. If you write do tell her how much I miss her, and how I want her to come back."

So you see your little friend is entirely and enthusiastically loyal. . . .

I went to Boston on Grand Army Day, which I suppose you know about, and took a boat and was rowed into the harbor and saw the warships. Coming back to Washington Street, I could see nothing for the crowd, and could not cross the street, which was roped off. And there I was cut off from my native home with the broad Atlantic rolling behind me. But I made out to get into an office at the corner, and saw about a mile of New York soldiers, and then got a chance to cross the street, and come home.

So my dear child, I have filled up two pages with airy nothings. I do hope that when you get this long letter, even though it should be dull to you, you will take your pen and tell me that you have got ever so much better and are coming home. . . . Writing a letter to a distant friend with whom you have not talked for a good while, reminds one how much of the sociability of everyday life is made up of trivial commonplaces, which are vivified by the friendly presence, and colored by the lively suggestions that passing circumstances offer. It luckily occurs to me just as I am lapsing into reflection, that the little fish said he had constructed two verses, and rather bashfully said he should like to have Miss Mary see them.

"Dear Mary, how I long
Your pleasant face to greet
And see you well and strong,
Come back to Brimmer Street.

"I'm but a little fish,
And little do I know;
But this it is I wish,
And I do tell you so."

He asked me what I thought of them — whether they were good poetry. I told him it was just an honest sentiment on wheels so as to run easily — but that he must n't call it poetry — that that word had been abused enough already without his help. "Well, it was real honest," said he.

"Certainly," I told him, "but honesty is not poetry."

"Would you not like to write some poetry?" said he. "I can tell you lots of queer things about lobsters and crabs and them eccentrical kinds of fishes."

"Why no," I said, "if I should write poetry I have no doubt it would be very matter-of-fact in character, and I might be glad of your Uncle Lobster's anecdotes, but I don't care to go into it."

Now, Miss, if you find the little nonsense I have put together tedious, don't bother yourself with it a moment. If you can write without fatigue I should like at least a short account of how you get on; but if it is fatiguing to you, I would be content to hear about you from your mother, and so I subscribe myself

Affectionately your old friend.

To Mrs. J. G. Palfrey

No. 5 Appian Way,
Tuesday, September 9, 1890.

My dear Mrs. Palfrey, —

You will be interested when you hear that your and my friend, the Owl, who has occupied something like a judicial position on my mantelpiece for some years, with credit to himself — when you hear, I say that he met with a severe fall, a few days since. I am sorry to say that his ear was somewhat injured; but I rejoice to tell you that when reinstated, he resumed (if for a second he lost it) the aspect of profound reflection which is his characteristic.

His eye is, if anything, wider open than before — ready to catch upon its surface all that the world offers to his capacity for deep study and severe analysis.

I think that the pain he suffered has slightly softened his expression without weakening it.

If I were to offer, with all tenderness, anything like a criticism on our friend's countenance, I should say, that the *bulge* of the eye is somewhat excessive and gives a suggestion of vague curiosity, quite at variance with the inward concentration which we attribute to him.

And, as extremes meet, we must admit that that full-orbed gaze of his might suggest to the careless observer an idea of vacancy, totally alien to his judicial aspect and attitude, and contradictory to his title as the bird of wisdom.

All this, is between *us*. *We* know, appreciate, and revere our friend, and if we trifle a moment about a seeming weakness or two, it is only to recur with a warmer zeal to his great merits.

Let us rejoice that he has escaped destruction, and even serious dilapidation.

A week last Saturday I went to the Metropolis, and returning was tempted to walk too far, and have been very stationary ever since but am getting well again.

I know of nothing to tell you in our part of the town except that the solitude shows some signs of disturbance. Our friends are approaching and the Indians and wolves are gradually withdrawing.

Hoping that you, Madam, and all, have been well since my pleasant evening with you, I ask the pleasure of signing myself,

Your Friend, and your partner in the ideal dance.

To Mrs. J. G. Palfrey

Cambridge, *March* 23, 1891.

My dear Mrs. Palfrey, —

I feel the responsibility of writing to you as the representative of this quarter of the town, very heavily. I shall endeavor to divest myself of sectional prejudices, and though I may naturally elevate the character of the Appian Way District, I shall be careful to say nothing that may wound your pride in your very Scientific locality.[1]

Perhaps the much-frequented thoroughfare on which I dwell affords a better study of human nature — a more enlarged view of life — than your sylvan surroundings. But what we may gain in largeness of view we lose in the diffusion of our ideas over a larger surface.

(These long sentences are only for the purpose of getting a start. They will serve to set off any little liveliness I may attempt to offer as a contrast.)

But then for liveliness? — No. 5 A. W. does not seem exactly the place to apply to, for such an article. It is true that I have had one organ-grinder today — He ground a reasonable quantity of music, but he cost me two cents, which in my present — or at any rate, recent — economical frame of mind, is equivalent to twenty-four hours of depression, or at least of diminished vitality.

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[1] Mrs. Palfrey lived near the Agassiz Museum

I do not follow the maxim of "Small profits and quick returns" but of small profits and slow returns, as I am unfortunately an object of partiality to the ambulatory artists.

So any hope that I offered of exhilaration by force of animal spirits must be abandoned.

I fear I shall have to resort to the means you yourself have afforded me, viz: to the pleasant recollection of the tea party, and the social gathering in your chamber. It was quite an event in my retired life, and I have felt since quite a man of the world.

I went yesterday afternoon to Mr. Lowell's and found him in bed with a tardy remainder of his gout — now in the hand. He was somewhat better. Thence I went to Mr. Hooper's[1] and saw some of his young folks. He was out. He made me a very pleasant call on Sunday, and I think this was the first time of my going to his house. You know he has annexed the Gurney's house to his own. I looked into the room where they used to sit.

I called last Thursday at Mr. Waldo Higginson's.

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[1] Edward W. Hooper, Treasurer of Harvard College.

They said that he was very comfortable but that he had not gained in strength.

I trust that our party was not too much for you. I hope that it was a benefit.

There has been no agitation in Appian Way that I am aware of, unless a momentary disturbance at No. 5 with regard to the exportation of dust-barrels to the sidewalk, which was of short duration.

I shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon and of finding you restored to the parlor.

With kind regards to all my entertainers, and with my respects to yourself, as you will insist that you are my senior,

I am, Dear Madam,
Yours truly.

To Miss Anna Higginson

March 11, 1891.

. . . If I find a publisher willing to set forth in two small duodecimos a work entitled "A Journey from Chestnut to Tremont Street, in the Metropolis of Massachusetts, with remarks upon the Manners and Customs of the Natives, and upon its public monuments, particularly the Statue of Governor John Winthrop in Scollay Square, — together with meteorological observations collected during the transit, which will include accurate measurements of the depth of mud, made by the author himself, as well as of the various acclivities and declivities, with a fine steel (conjectural) portrait of Christopher

Columbus, the renowned Discoverer of America" — I say, if I find a publisher for the proposed work, you shall receive the earliest copy.

I dispense therefore with any attempt at present to inform you of my labors and sufferings (not to speak of perils) during this long and zigzag wandering.

Suffice it to say that I got tired and once seated myself upon about two inches of projection at the foot of a column, and with my stick advanced as a prop appeared to gaze in at the lace-curtained windows opposite. I rested at S. S. Pierce's and then attempted a negative sort of adornment of my person by going to the hair-cutter. Thence to Temple Street, where I had again to rest as I waited — this time with my foot on a doorstep and the cane acting again as a prop. Thence I went by Garden Street car to J. R. L.'s and found him down stairs and quite free from pain.

When I got home at about 6 you will be pleased as a friend to know that I had an appetite such as we see attributed to ship-wrecked mariners and Arctic voyagers, having fasted since 9 A.M. (I shall put this into the book.)

On Sunday I went to meeting and sat in my (half) pew. Professor Torrey was not there. Mr. Dixwell[1] took my arm after meeting, and it is not for me to decide which was the column and which (I am forced to use the language of poetry most unwillingly and unaptly) and which the vine, but if there had been a slip we should have fallen in one common ruin.

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[1] Epes Sargent Dixwell, 1807–1899; Harvard A.B. 1827.

TO WALDO HIGGINSON

[*March*, 1891?].

. . . I suppose that a person involved like both of you in an enterprise demanding much calculation is seldom interrupted in his computation by an intrusive sentence from the last Sunday's sermon. This is merely philosophical reflection. I have n't the least idea of a "slant" at you or Mr. Bates.

James Lowell has had a hard time lately with a furious fit of gout — has had a great deal of severe pain, and his left hand became so weak that I think he could not hold his pipe with it. He has got much better and has had the Whist Club twice at his house — not venturing out in the evening. Charles Storey lately, in a note to me, alluded to James and his confinement for a time to his bed and said, "What pleasant reflections he must have!" — a remark which I think applies well to a friend of ours who has a large interest in the Cambridge Divinity School.[1]

What can I tell you about our Old Cambridge that can possibly please you. Old Cambridge! now debauched with numbers — wealth — an intellectual furor that allows the mind no rest — and a rage for amusements that allows none to the body. "The Market Place," or "Down in Town" become "The Square," "Willards," the "Car Office," the Court House, "The Lyceum." What can I do better than transport you for a moment back to the calm and the complete homeness of 1820, by a few extracts from private memoranda of the time.

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[1] Mr. Higginson was a member of the Harvard Overseers Committee to visit the Divinity School.

(MR. WHIPPLE.) "*Mem.* Owe Deacon Brown 36 cts. for 1 doz. Havana cigars. *Mem.* My fee in Munroe *vs.* Hunnewell for breach of fence by cow, $1.50. Have been reading Cooper's 'Bravo of Venice,'—a great book. *Mem.* Due Willard 25 cts."

(DEACON MUNROE.) "*Mem.* Prof. Farrar. One week's work repairing chaise, $6."

(SQUIRE WINTHROP.) "Yesterday passed a very pleasant Independence Day. After breakfast to Brown's shop and bo't a good supply of lemons and had a [illegible] punch made. Mr. Craigie came to dinner and in the afternoon we sat out on my front yard, and enjoyed the view of the River and of the College Sloop just coming up from Kennebec. Craigie very sanguine about his Lechmere's Point plan. I tell him he'd better sit out in his porch and drink punch (which is one of the healthiest liquors in the world) — told him if he did n't succeed he'd be a poor debtor and have to stay at home all but Sundays. *Mem.* Walked this morning to Brighton Bridge, found a number of boys fishing. They had taken several of one to two pounds. Will go down and try it myself some morning. Coming back met

Gibson and Gordon each with a jug of rum. They were going down the river in Stedman's boat afishing. Gordon told of 5 sea perch that he caught one morning from Brighton Bridge that weighed twenty pounds, but he'd been drinking — two pounds is good weight."

Fearing that I am tedious and hoping to see you soon,

Yours affectionately.

To Miss Anna Higginson

Cambridge, *April* 15, 1891.

My dear Miss Anna, —

I have been very inactive for nearly a week — have been in the house the greater part — almost all the time, and have not risen to the level of a Correspondent.

A certain well-known dramatist says, "There is a tide in the affairs of men," and if that is the case, there must be low tide sometimes, and I suppose it must have been low tide with me.

I do not pretend to record public events. The newspaper thrusts everything discoverable upon its readers. The only important event in domestic life has been the disappearance of Captain Tom Gray — a feline gentleman much valued by the household, though prevailingly of an outdoor habit of life.

The *Cat's Chronicle and Back Yard Advertiser* has not as yet made any mention of his disappearance, being doubtless unwilling to shock the public while any spark of hope remains. But in this house he is given up and I feel a certain pleasure in thinking that a brief notice of him sent to you will introduce his character (all that is left of him) to the Metropolis.

Captain Tom was generously built by Nature, with an aspect corresponding to his frame. It was bold without insolence, with a noble frankness of expression which was as good as a free ticket of admission to the public heart. His look alone was a chapter of life philosophy that cheered and strengthened all its readers.

I knew him first during an interval when he was left by the family in the next house, and had as yet acquired no other domicile — I was not aware of this but used to see him sitting on the piazza at No. 5 with the air as I now interpret it of a noble exile. I made some friendly advances to him which he seemed disposed to accept, although common prudence forbade him to let me approach very closely. He seemed to say, "Sir, had I such security as I ought to demand from mankind, I would gladly accept your friendship."

But I must not linger with my recollections. Captain Tom had a regular and capacious appetite, index of a healthy expansive spirit.

He had a hearty appreciation of the more solid blessings of life but was far from an epicurean. "Give me but enough," he would say. "The most fatal fault in diet is insufficiency."

He was in favor of woman suffrage — "For," said he, "who are our friends, the friends of our race. Who feeds us but woman?" — "I tell you," he once said to a friend; "take an average ton of men and the same of women, and weigh their sense and their goodness, all the good qualities in a pile, and don't you believe the women would beat more than half the time?"

He was a strong advocate of home happiness and a foe to all that should supplant or even rival it. "A fellow," he would say, "should stick to his own premises. There's where he ought to find his happiness, among his own family and friends. I never knew a cat that went abroad a good deal but what came to mischief sometime or other. No, Sir, a cat ought to stick to his own barn or cellar (or parlor, if he's a parlor cat) and his own back yard."

"The world," he said once, "is just as good as crazy now with their clubs and societies and receptions and all lecturing each other to death. How many folks do you suppose you'll find at home now of an evening? Cambridge was a sensible place in 1820, according to what my grandfather told me, and he always used to say to me, 'Tom! Stay at home when you have a home!'"

My dear Miss Anna, I hope you will excuse my dwelling so much on ("the late," I fear) Capt. Tom Gray. There is no small news current here just now. There was a slight temporary excitement a little while ago over the dust-barrels that are set in the street, but it soon subsided and matters were peacefully arranged. There has been a little talk about arsenical paper and one citizen is having his walls denuded — but then there are so many ways of getting a stomachache without arsenic, that one is doubtful. I must close my letter having told you all, and I am

Very truly and cordially
Your old friend.

Love to Waldo

To Waldo Higginson

April 16, 1891.

. . . How Mr. Ames must miss your attentive serious face, for even if your mind wandered for a moment to the subject of the Cohasset waterworks, you would seem devoted to the sermon. When a man is good, "all through," Satan may divert his attention with secularities, but cannot rob him of his solemn and saintly demeanor.

I suppose your friend Mr. Bates occasionally finds himself saying "7½ per cent," instead of "Amen," to some impressive truth that his minister utters.

To Waldo Higginson

Cambridge, *May* 6, 1891.

My dear Waldo, —

I am happy now to have something to write you of stirring interest. Last Saturday I set out for the alternative objective points, the North Pole, or Alaska.

A sudden spirit of enterprise took possession of me. I longed to force my way to one of these two distant points. I said to myself, energy to set off and perseverance to continue are the two things wanted. I hardly consented to count in as a third the small bag, whose scanty contents were to stimulate my self-reliance, and develop my energies. I bade a brief but kindly adieu to the country about the Appian Way and in a moment found myself on the world's broad highway. The reflections of a traveller on such a scale as mine, at setting out, are usually superseded or obliterated by the hard experience of after travel. I therefore briefly record my own, while they are yet fresh.

First, I expanded with the feeling that I was no longer a dweller in Appian Way, but a cosmopolite. I no longer dealt with states, districts, cities and towns. Meridians of latitude and longitude were now my measures. My powers of observation and comparison were awakened. I viewed with a careful eye the trees, the herbage, the weeds, even the stratification of rocks; nothing was too great or too small for my attempts at analysis. I even thought before I arrived at Watertown[1] that I discerned a shade of change in the material productions of Nature, and even in the form, features, and carriage of men. This it is (I said to myself) to travel!

[1] Three miles distant from Cambridge.

The ardor for discovery, for knowledge upon a world scale, remoulds the man. It was not until I arrived at Newton that the immensity of my plan seemed to break upon me, and as the chilly breeze swept through the open door, I became aware of the rude opposition I must encounter toward the Pole, or even before I reached Alaska, if that should be my course; but my ardor soon revived, and my mind being now chilled down to proper degree, I formed between Newton and Newtonville a glacial theory which I trust you will some time give me the pleasure of approving.

Arrived at Newtonville at my nephew's, social blandishments stole unawares upon my mind and relaxed the intensity of its tone. Social comfort and hilarity acted as a positive bane upon one strung up to highest pitch of enterprise. Perhaps I had done better to withhold my purpose from them. Their solicitude for my safety impaired my confidence in myself. When I was cautioned about descending the stairs, or led with filial attention down the steps, what, said I to myself, shall I do among glaciers, gulfs, chasms? If the stairs require the prudence of two people, what will one alone do upon the awful steeps of the Ural?

Thus repelled and discouraged from adventure, and at the same time enticed towards the comforts of social life — I finally, after a severe struggle, concluded to go no farther at present toward the North Pole than Newtonville. It is a great thing though to have been en route for the N. P. I am now entitled to say, — as preface to narrative discourse, — Some time since, when I was on my way to the N. P. or Alaska.

I returned from my expedition to the N. P. on Tuesday afternoon. I have quite recovered from my excitement except that I have a hard time in my sleep. What with being tossed by the wild bulls of northern regions — coming down long mountains garnished with precipices, "by the run," as we say, I have by day a sense of general contusion that is quite painful.

Pardon this tedious letter, my dear Waldo — it is written for your good, and, if tedious, let it act as polisher to your patience. We must make the best use we can of all our means.

Yours affectionately.

To Waldo Higginson

Cambridge,
Wednesday, June 3d, 1891.

My dear Waldo, —

There is with the invalid a contest between the physical and moral being, and a friend who cannot help the one feels urged to offer his aid to the other.

I don't know the man with whom I should feel less of awkwardness than with you in setting forth those moral aids which the invalid is in a measure disabled to apply to himself.

Only to state your advantages as an invalid would seem enough to make your spiritual being arise to cheerful and athletic encouragement of its oppressed fellow-worker.

A character approved, a being beloved by so many. This is enough without recalling the more immediate consolations that surround you.

I may recall to mind your serene patience. I wish to avoid all difficulty with regard to self-admiration; I therefore ask as a favor that you will allow your spiritual being to take a view of itself and bestow an innocent smile of approval.

Happy man to whom we can say such things!

Yours affectionately.

To C. W. Storey

Cambridge, *July* 14, 1891.

My dear Charles, —

I ought to have written you about James,[1] but have found him from time to time in so much the same condition that I forgot my duty to his friend, at a distance from him.

I called on him with J. B. last Saturday and found him with the sciatica still in possession — and he said that his voice had failed him the day before — but it was fairly audible while we were there. His look — his aspect — was I thought quite good and natural.

But alas, I got a note from J. B. this evening to this effect: —

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[1] J. Lowell.

". . . Kindly send me your address, Newburyport, that I may send you frequent bulletins of Mr. Lowell. He had a severe attack this morning — has been under the influence of opium all day."

Doctor Walcott pronounces his case as "critical"! This, though we will hope the best, is sad news for us all.

I shall let you hear on Thursday whatever there is to tell to one so much interested as you.

To Miss Grace Norton

CAMBRIDGE, *July* 18, 1891.

My messenger reports, —

"Condition much as yesterday. He had a very poor night."

James has been having sciatica all along, but this new attack of pain is, I believe attributed to the liver. "Enlargement of the liver" is the term used by the doctor I hear.

To Miss Anna Higginson

CAMBRIDGE, *August* 4, 1891.

. . . I have been, for me, so tempestuously tossed about in the world that I hardly know how to begin anything like narrative to you. The Merrimack expedition seems to stand first, so, if you say, we will have at it.

It was on a fine summer day that a man somewhat beyond middle age stood at the gate of an unpretentious edifice in the well-known Appian Way.

The golden rod by the margin of the quaint street was rioting in his brightest colors, while the succory with its pale blue eye seemed to gaze with modest interest on the person who, by the capacious valise which he held in his hand, was evidently on the point of launching into itinerary adventure. How do you like that? or do you prefer this?

On Saturday July 18, — valise in hand, I walked to the "Square" (formerly "down in town"), I boarded methinks an Electric and proceeded to the metropolis. Took a cab at or near the Revere, and to Eastern R.R. station — a squalid station! Feeling a suggestion of hunger, I mounted on one of the high stools in front of the culinary counter and demanded soup. The soup here, i.e. at the station, I take it is perennial, that is, refreshed with new supplies of solid, and always doing. It inclined to tasteless — probably a part of its solid element was immersed in January or thereabout. But there was plenty of heat. If I had been in any hurry I should have had to leave it, either to refresh some of the waiters or to be plunged into the common stock. Dr. Johnson might have said of it: "The soup was below any measure I possess of demerit. I approached it with misgiving and left it with disgust. The coffee, uncontaminated by its fellowship with the soup, might have been tolerated, but the heat of both was such as to add physical pain to the pangs of unsatisfied hunger."

To Miss Anna Higginson

August 26, 1891.

. . . I have been disarranged and tossed on huge billows of circumstance, the smallest of which has been large enough to hurl me as far as the Metropolis and, refluent, to sweep me back.

James Lowell had been so long ill that his death made very much less impression as a *social* loss than if it had occurred earlier. The value of the man is fully estimated by all his friends. I think he is more tenderly remembered than his manly bearing would have given reason to expect.

All of them seem to look back at him in his character of kind and gentle friend.

To Miss Anna Higginson

September 29, 1891.

I arrived in the Metropolis, took a herdic and was so shaken up that I ought in justice to myself to take another day to entirely realize my identity or rather to fully identify myself with the old gent who embarked at Cohasset. I think that if I were a surgeon and had a patient who was pretty generally dislocated (i.e. his joints were) I should put him in a herdic for a mile trip; his bones would have to change their position entirely and therefore be reset at the end of his journey.

I don't dislike it though; it is a gymnasium in which you are put through all possible violent contortions for twenty-five cents, with no voluntary exertion on your own part.

To Miss Grace Norton

Cambridge, *September*, 1891.

My dear Miss Grace, —

The first matter you would wish to hear of will be, what I have seen of J. R. L. since you went away.

He continued, you know, probably, to be attacked by one symptom after another, all I suppose coming from one cause. He had at one time, — it might be before you went, — a dreadfully hard cough — it seemed as if he were coughing from wood rather than flesh and blood. This kept him awake several hours. The last trouble was sciatic pain. He had this when I saw him last, and had on the day before lost his voice, which was then weak.

This was on the tenth of July, when I called with Mr. Bartlett. James was in his chair, composed and uncomplaining as always. On the 14th I received a note from Mr. B. saying that James had had an attack of very severe pain, and that his situation was critical, — or to that effect. After that I saw Mabel once. She said that her father wandered a good deal but could collect his thoughts to answer a question rationally. From this to the end, the reports were much alike. I suppose him to have wandered prevailingly.

The most of cheerfulness that I have seen in him was at the Whist Club. Here, he at times reached a moderate gaiety. That institution exactly suited his fancy. The serious, even solemn work of playing (at which he was very quick and clear), with its interval of sober conviviality, was a little play in two acts, the first, with its kings and queens, reminding him of the great world in which he had been, — the second with its easy-going good humour, that he was *at home* and among old friends. I was always pleased with his references to Mrs. Battles, which I am very sure he continued to make even in these later days at the whist table.

It is pleasant to see so many testimonials to his excellent and charming qualities, come from all directions.

His long illness, which made him a secluded invalid was a preparation for his loss. In looking back I recall no passion or petulance on his part, but always an equable amiability whose value was not diminished by his entirely manly bearing. It was, without detracting from his natural goodness, a noble, principled self-restraint.

The numerous evidences of affectionate regard that have appeared since his death agree with the opinion I express.

Undoubtedly you had become familiarized with the idea of his death some considerable time since, or rather, I presume you had. I don't know whether you feel his loss more there than you would here, or not.

To Waldo Higginson

November 4, 1891.

. . . I looked in the *Transcript* for the Abbot [1] article which Miss Anna mentioned. It is indeed very spicy — ginger, hot in the mouth, largely infused. I think it will be a difficult indictment to support. If Professor Royce said that he stole his idea from another, in so many words, there would be a flavor of larceny, but if Mr. Abbot made off unconsciously with an essential idea, as when one goes innocently home under another man's hat, and Professor Royce tells him, "Sir, you have another man's hat on," I fear the Faculty will not give him the desired correction.

Doctor Royce is so sedentary, that a little visit to H. of C.[2] and exercise on the tread-wheel might do him good, and it would certainly give pleasure to Mr. A., while the damage to character would be small as the "literary fellers" have so much spurring of that sort. I leave it to you to decide what is deniable in the case and shall value your opinion if you will send it some time by Miss Anna (by letter).

I shall try to ascertain Cambridge public opinion, and send you word of it. The matter seems to me so new and strange that I imagine our good folks to be more stupefied than anything else.

As to advice, — my motto is, "Give and take."

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[1] Francis Ellingwood Abbot, 1836–1903, Harvard A.B. 1859, had recently published a philosophical work, the originality of which Professor Josiah Royce impugned severely.

[2] House of Correction.

One party, the giver, is sure to feel self-complacent and the other is indifferent.

To Miss Anna Higginson

December 10, 1891.

. . . On Tuesday at or about 9 o'clock I went with my neighbor Mr. Carret to the polls and voted "no license" and a variety of other alternatives in the Australian manner. This ballot may be considered a kangaroo leap in political progress. You go into a little stall and prepare your little fraction of the peoples' will for publication in serene quiet. You then appear before a little mill; your name is sonorously proclaimed, you present your ballot at an aperture and it is ground in, and you march out on the line by which you entered, — that is, a continuation of that line, for you may not retrace your steps. You have now executed your fraction of sovereign power and you may wear on your hat if you wish: "Here goes the 6,000th part of a King." There is no law against such a proceeding.

For my part I felt such elasticity after wielding my portion of sovereignty, that I went home by Garden Street *via* Brattle Street, though the greater distance.

To Miss Anna Higginson

Cambridge, *January* 22, 1892.

My dear Miss Anna, —

I have your kind card before me and the *Littell*, newly arrived, lying tranquil in his bonds with an expression on his surface that seems to say, "Read Marbot!" To which I answer, "Yes my dear, but by daylight!"

I then release him from his swathing and he looks grateful and seems to say, "Thank you, Good Sir! It *is* pleasant to stretch. This travelling by mail is very cramped — and such company! I lay cheek by jowl with an Ayer's Pill pamphlet. I have a drugged sort of feeling even yet, tho' the air in your Appian Way seems very pure.

"I heard Mr. Higginson say that you would appreciate me, and Miss Anna said, 'Yes'! If this is complimentary to me, it is also the same to you, for my 'Marbot' is a very superior affair even in our high grade of selections. We *are* very select. Indeed as my friend Littell says in his pleasant way, 'We are nothing if not select.'

"There's a good deal of jealousy among the articles which I, as a Number, have nothing to do with. If I hear any wranglings I shut my covers down as close as their elasticity will allow. But you must excuse me for running on so, but the light and the warm air and the sense of enlargement after that horrid leather pouch gave me an irresistible impulse. I am happy to make your acquaintance! I shall be happy to form a part of your library."

"Thank you, my dear," I answered in a fatherly way. "I am obliged to my friend Mr. Higginson for his kind remembrance and to Miss Anna for announcing it so pleasantly to me."

"Oh!" interrupted No. 2482, "I have a great value for them both, and as a literary member of the family I have become quite intimately acquainted with them."

"Have you," said I, "heard Mr. Higginson say anything about the Divinity School lately?"

"Why," said 2482, "I thought his mind was on that topic once when he spoke to himself."

"What did he say?" I asked.

"He said that he feared his deputy out there carried liberality too near indifference and was making wild work, — but I am not *sure* that he was alluding to the School."

"Well now, 24," I said, "you had better take some rest after your journey from the Metropolis."

"Good Night," he said; "but let me just tell you that Miss Anna read my 'Marbot' all through to Mr. Higginson."

"Is n't she a Reader?"

To Miss Anna Higginson

Cambridge, *March* 9, 1892.

My dear Miss Anna, —

I suppose Waldo will want an exact account of the School (great responsibility as it is to me.) While the athletic games continued, there was a good degree of sober industry, directed to the steady acquisition of knowledge — but when they went into winter quarters doctrinal eccentricities and animosities developed, which allowed only a government of compromise and conciliation.

The professors have to use the utmost caution in their lectures not to speak too hardly of any heretics whose doctrines may have been partially adopted by some of the students. Violent language and even missiles have made prudence familiar to the teachers. In speaking of any teacher of false doctrine they enlarge as much as possible on his natural good qualities and apologize for his errors. For instance, the Ophules. "This deluded (as is now by most considered) but entirely respectable class adopted a belief which made them the apparent worshippers of the serpent. This we do not assert to be the truth, but there was some apparent ground for the statement. Take the Manicheans. These sectaries arose from a respectable source, though they have been considered to indulge in wild reveries and unintelligible schemes of creation and providence. Manes might perhaps by the voice of candor be pronounced only a rather too advanced man for his time, i.e., in boldness of thought and of speech."

Of Tom Paine the professor says in his desk: "Mr. Thomas Paine chose an eccentric path of incredulity which caused deep regret to those who could not follow him in his ideas and may be considered perhaps (by those who differ from him) (though himself supported by a very considerable number of respectable citizens) as more ingenious than prudent." Voltaire: "A man of excellent ability but considered by judicious men to have perverted his powers to the propagation of skepticism and (as some assert) of infidelity." Simon Magus: "Although classed among the dubious claimants of the title of Christian, his error was perhaps not unnatural to a disciple newly emerged from paganism, in assigning a pecuniary and commercial value to spiritual gifts. Such is the state of the school."

This to Waldo. I have often heard them say "If we only had our old Overseer here! He was the fellow! He'd pluck you up a heresy as if it was chickweed, in a second, and yet none of us got out with him."

"I remember when I had a turn to the Gnostic heresy," says one to me, — "he cured me of it in no time. He had the Doctor to me and got me put on diet — and had ice put on my neck and a mustard poultice on both arms. Peters, too, was a violent Hopkinsian. He put him on regulations of one sort and another and he was well in a week."

So you see how much I need you to take my place.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *March* 15, 1892.

(Please burn this when read)

My dear Benefactress, —

Don't you (go an') think me ungrateful because you have not heard anything from me all this time. Gratitude does n't evaporate because it is n't expressed.

And now that I have the conductor in my hand we will see if there is not some gratitude *on tap* (if I may use that expression to a young lady).

Mary Ware! It was beautifully done of you to look after that old man and see him, so far as you could, safe on his way. I suppose it really seemed a prudent thing to you, and I suppose was prudent, but it is very hard for an old gent to fully realize it.

Black ran the tide in the river below;
The old man rose and said, "I must go,
Home must I go by the slow-rolling car
Though the night is cold and the journey far."

The fair damsel laughed, and she said, "O, Nay,
If thou goest at all it shall be in my way;
And a vow I have made to the blessed St. Roche,
Thou only shalt go in a Boston coach."

The poem goes on to tell how the old man got out, and after a little waiting entered a car, rode to Cambridge, and walked up from the Square and found it cold as Greenland, and had visions of a coroner's jury sitting all comfortably upon him. The last two lines are: —

The old gent crept slowly to No. 5,
Saying, "Bless Mary Ware that I am alive."

It has given me a deal of trouble to make up even this outline of a narrative from the poem with such very large omissions, but I wished you to see something like historical evidence of my gratitude, which is shown by the unknown writer in the exclamation in the last line. . . .

I have not a particle of village news to tell you, I am out of the range of it. My field of vision is Appian Way, which is a very tranquil thoroughfare most of the time. . . . Please remember me to your mama and allow me to sign myself

Your old friend.

P.S. Rose (the Cat) would be happy to see any of your cat's young friends, or herself, if she does not fear the grippe, out here, to tea. Rose must have heard me repeat the foregoing invitation to myself, for she tells me in her language that that is no sort of an invitation, and suggests as follows — "Miss Rose, the Established Cat at No. 5 Appian Way, would be happy to see her friend, the Established Cat at No. — Brimmer Street, to tea any afternoon, or any of her young friends who would like to vary metropolitan life by a short stay in the suburbs. Rose."

To Miss Anna Higginson

Cambridge, *June* 22, 1892.

Tell Waldo that the School is all right. One of the pupils, or rather scholars, is desirous to join a circus this summer to help pay his expenses. I have referred him to Waldo. I should say it was going a little too far.

Commencement is at hand, both of College and Annex, and their only effect on me is to turn my mind back to the old genuine Commencement. Do encourage Waldo to reminisce in like manner, and if he will to indulge his fancy with a boyish repast of that period.

Bill of Fare

Watermelon — peach — peach — watermelon — plums, if attainable — ice cream, if financially possible — watermelon — spruce beer — peaches — watermelon — spruce beer.

To Miss Anna Higginson

Cambridge, *September* 30, 1892.

My dear Miss Anna, —

You recollect the publisher with the hysteric poor author — "But my dear young man! But my dear young man!"

So I to you. But my dear Miss Anna! But my dear Miss Anna!

As if I were not already enough possessed with the spirit of free travel, free board and free quarters, you have now done your best to aggravate my appetite for all those luxuries.

I shall now enquire of the conductor, whether Mr. Higginson, to his knowledge, has friends resident on the route to Cohasset — and if so who they are, and where they dwell — and on the strength of the extremely robust invitation I have received shall feel it my duty to call — introduce myself — and (if received with the cordiality that I expect) to stay a day or two with each of them. For this purpose (if executed) I shall purchase a new dilatory ticket, reserving Waldo's for the return.

I have got my head so full of this generous and noble idea (proper only of course to those who keep house) that I should hardly dare trust myself on the road just now. I fear that if I fell into pleasant discourse with any comfortable-looking person I should offer to stop where he did and dine with him. It will take some time and reflection to expel this exaggeration from my fancy. Meanwhile I overrun with enthusiasm and applause for Waldo's and your noble and sensible ideas on the subject of hospitality.

Beside what I have said — I have to apply the most powerful moral leverage before I can hoist myself into the athletic attitude of a traveller. "Cohasset. A town situated in Plymouth County, Massachusetts, Longitude — Latitude etc." *See* Gazetteer.

You would hardly believe me if I told you that in my present state of home adhesiveness, those words, "Plymouth County," have thrown me into a cold perspiration.

I went to the Metropolis yesterday and am scarcely done glorifying over that Plymouth County! (There! if you'll believe me, another chill!)

But I tell you, Miss Anna, I will be "girding up my loins" (fine old scripture phrase!) to come as first proposed, and all the time with great admiration and gratitude for the urgent epistle.

Now for our news. They are coming back — there are signs of them, but the great wave crested with trunks and — and — bedsteads, for all I know, has not broken on us yet.

The College Cats, i.e., the Memorial Hall Cats, are waiting anxiously for the re-opening. I fear that they have had to live mostly on reminiscences.

To C. W. Storey

October 22, 1892.

I meant to answer your note yesterday by appearing in Brookline. I went in over the new bridge and on Boylston Street encountered the procession, which I managed to cut across. I called on John Dwight and then repaired to the R.R. and found that no cars were running on Huntington Ave. I took a herdic to Tremont House, thinking there might be some car running thence, but there was no sign. Then I said, "I will make for my native home." So with some pains I got over to the easterly sidewalk, and very shortly found myself arrested and vigorously compressed by one of the toughest bits of crowd that I have seen. I had meant to slip quietly down School Street and through by the old Court House, and here was I, an aged gent from the rural districts, jammed in with a pressure of about a ton to a square inch — lame leg and all, with nothing but this restricted privilege with sky privilege attached, for that was the only free prospect. A few minutes before I was a comfortable burgess going to slip down School Street — slip down School Street! slip down the Cordilleras — wade through the Straits of Magellan and take a pleasant stroll to the end of Cape Horn. *No, Sir!* It was so that Circumstance answered me. No, Sir!! Make yourself as comfortable as the situation will permit. The procession must get through sometime before midnight. So I stood it out as well as might be, till at last I made my way to the roadway and boarded a wagon with two Italians in it, and paying a small fee secured a seat. After resting went to Parker's and got a pewter and some bread and *old* cheese, and then made for home.

When I heard the ribs crack in the crowd yesterday I said, "This is progress! we are clearing away the difficulties!"

To C. W. Storey

January 28, 1893.

Somehow or other with my sparse and slender social relations I feel a very much occupied man. The fact is that, inertia fixed and solid being my base of operations, I am a hard-worked man. At every move, I have to take the attitude of an athlete, and burst the bonds that have woven themselves about me. I am now recovering from exhaustion consequent on a trip to Newtonville. This was a violent shock to my sense of cohesion and permanence. It was three days, at least, before I could identify myself with the solid, sedate inhabitant of No. 5 A.W. and my self-consciousness, perplexed and shaken, seemed constantly to ask, "*Mais que diable allait-il faire dans cette Newtonville?*"

I went to a "quartervadollar" concert last night, and feel more fashionable today than you would expect from such a dissipation.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *April* 12, 1893.

. . . Your Afghan has produced an extraordinary effect on me. I find myself (now and then) experiencing an assimilation to the thoughts and habits of the people whose garb I have partially adopted. Having a vague idea that they at a remote period were forced into Mohammedanism, I grow warm with a sense of their wrongs, and am seized with a desire to avenge them — a patriotic desire I may call it.

I find that the only way to allay this fervor is to arm myself (in imagination), to put on your present (over a complete suit of armor) and sally forth into the past centuries against the foe.

You would be pleased to see the heads slip off like sliced cucumbers — colossal Paynims "cloven to the chine." When my rage for massacre is satiated, I return to my normal peaceful frame of mind — fold the Afghan, and lay it aside, until another access of hostilitv against the oppression of my adopted kinsfolk.

To C. E. Norton

CAMBRIDGE, *November* 12, 1893.

MY DEAR MR. NORTON, —

I take great pleasure in receiving "J. R. L.'s" letters[1] from you.

My thanks may seem a little tardy, but they are not warmed up! No! Gratitude, working in her crypt with a pleasant smile, has endued them with fresh and unmeasured warmth, which with a pleasant touch of the businesslike, "she warrants durable."

She says that she is pleased to be again indebted to you, and asks me if she may send you her kindest regards.

All that I hear speak of it pronounce your work well done. I hope to have it read to me very soon.

Please not mind my handwriting — I can't read it myself.

With kind regards and renewed supplementary thanks,

Yours.

From this time on John Holmes's letters, usually written by an amanuensis, are few, but they still have up to the last his characteristic touch.

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[1] *Letters of James Russell Lowell,* edited by Charles Eliot Norton. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Bro., 1894.

To Miss M. L. Ware

Cambridge, *December* 11, 1893.

. . . Have no doubts about the fit, the color, the texture or the ornamentation of your coat. Public opinion declares emphatically in favor of all. I am considered in Appian Way to be in the foremost rank of the *beau monde* and representative of the *haut ton.*

The lace on my coat meets my eye and gives a pleasant suggestion of a comeliness due to friendly effort in my behalf. — What were man, did not Woman take him?

I am raised in a moment from economical mediocrity to — splendor, shall I say? Yes, splendor! — as measured by that public opinion to which I am ever loyal — the public opinion of Appian Way.

To C. E. Norton

Cambridge, *November* 9, 1894.

A short time since, an interviewer gave to the newspapers some remarks with regard to my father, — and, I am sure without your consent. This is my fixed belief, and I wish no confirmation — much less dissent. My belief is in the nature of a "Resolved," and settles the question for me.

If I had casually overheard these remarks without your knowledge, they would by no means have caused the surprise and filial horror that might perhaps have been expected.

They are such as any "liberal" would make with regard to the generality of "Orthodox" ministers and sermons of my father's or any other precedent New England period. The sermons of my father's time were in the traditional form handed down from the early Puritans and designed only for Calvinistic believers. To others they must have been dry as the sand of the desert at midday. Any preacher who strayed out from the Calvinistic fortification to gather pictorial stimulants to piety from earth and nature, which, overlaid with a pious varnish, he might present to his hearers, would have been frowned on and snubbed for his pains, and warned to attend only to vital piety and the saving of souls.

Almost the only eloquence open to the minister was that of the tocsin and fire-alarm, which brought twenty thousand people to hear Whitefield on Boston Common.

Dante should have a place for the "interviewer" — let us say a reporter's box, floored with a steady half-frozen vitality — a distant view of pardon — a stern keeper holding a golden ticket ready for him so soon as he completes a page of reported matter, while all sorts of the most pernicious and attractive rumors rush by his ear, leaving an impression just this side of completeness, and baffle his skill — with snatches of music from celestial fields to aggravate his situation.

I shall keep my fond recollection of you at my mother's funeral, and since, intact, and am

Your *old* friend
JOHN HOLMES.

I find it very hard to write, for I cannot read what I have written.

I should like a postal card from you with "Received — All right!" upon it.

TO MISS M. L. WARE

April 29, 1895.

. . . I have been to Provincetown (on the 18th by boat) and returned on the 19th, with Professor Thayer of the Law School, a most agreeable man — that being the purpose for which I went.

We go by sea and go by land.
In Provincetown, they go by sand.

For surely you don't consider sand as land when I saw there the tips of trees just emerging from the sandy billows that had drowned them.

Contrary to my expectation I found P. a very neat town — painted and neatly fenced when there was spare room, up to the beau ideal of a well-kept New England town. Here, I suppose, is about the place for a philosophical reflection — but I can't think of anything as expressive.

Perhaps we may say that it ought to be an eminently social place. In the town they have plank sidewalks and can circulate easily — all outside is over shoes in sand and there is no particular place to go to, that I am aware of. They have all scenic properties of ocean, the roar, the swash, the howl, the whistle, the scream of the tempest without stirring from their firesides, where they have the domestic thunder of the chimney and the sputtering of the wreck-wood.

Outside in a gale they say the driving sand is intolerable — that it scratches the spectacles of those who wear such armor.

Thus I have tried to fortify my "philosophical reflection."

TO MRS. GEORGE P. LAWRENCE

5 APPIAN WAY, *November* 13, 1895.

MY DEAR MRS. LAWRENCE, —

Your "cottage cheese" is a *very* pleasant article, as it has shown by throwing me into a kind of agricultural ecstasy in which I fancied I was the owner of a comfortable farm, and a lowly cot, with half a dozen cows and cutting twenty tons of hay yearly. I was just on the point of going to Boston to purchase salt for my stock when I awoke from my vision. I write you because no evidence of gratitude was forwarded to you last evening. Please accept my thanks.

Very truly yours.

To Miss Grace Norton

January 9, 1897.

Christmas is a benevolent Blizzard. It drives people with warm hearts, distracted heads, and perturbed countenance, in all directions. It blows from due South (no East in it) and has a peculiar softness that disguises its force. It has the property of shedding an inward light which gives a pleasant mental coloring and causes people whose benevolence of [*illegible*] overflow to go about wishing people Merry Christmas with a severe constrained expression. Most people, though, are illuminated by it.

Christmas is a season of perplexed uneasy happiness, but it has the equality to give a jocund form to things and to make people in a certain degree enjoy their unhappiness, and publish their miseries with an air of self-satisfaction.

The Blizzard part of Christmas has the curious power of being attracted by pecuniary value, it will turn a hundred purses inside out in a second without the least degree of perceptive violence. . . .

Meanwhile nearly four fifths of a century look down upon you pleasantly for your kindness to an "old gent."

Note. The term "old gent" bears the same relation to the full length expression that the "cut-away" coat does to the longer, broad-skirted article. *And*—old gents wear "cut-aways" nowadays.

To C. E. Norton

CAMBRIDGE, *August* 24, 1897.

MY DEAR MR. NORTON, —

After getting your pamphlet read to me, in two parts, the first by a friend whom I did not wish to detain, the remainder by Mr. Boott, I wrote on it "a model Memoir."[1]

This great "Imprimatur" I hope you will approve of.

You have performed your friendly office admirably, and I hope that you enjoy an honest self-approval equivalent to the labor it must have cost you.

I have been slow in acknowledging your attention, but certainly have not been diverted from my purpose by any gaieties, for I don't consider sciatica-lameness as coming under that head.

With thanks and kindest regards,

I am yours.

P.S. I can't read my letters you know — and my "helper" is of course on vacation, like all the rest of the [world?] so I have to send all the very possible blunders. . . . I ought to say that I valued Professor Child as highly as anybody but necessarily had to borrow to a certain extent from others' opinions, as I knew him personally so little.

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[1] Memoir of Francis J. Child. From the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. XXXII; reprinted with additions in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, December, 1897.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

LIKE many another life-long invalid, John Holmes possessed a singular vital tenacity. He outlived his more active brother Wendell by more than four years, and when he died, on January 27, 1899, of his old cronies only John Bartlett survived. But he was cared for in his last days by friends of a younger generation.

One of these friends was a neighbor, Mr. George P. Lawrence, whose daughter writes: —

"I think that Mr. Holmes had a horror of old age, especially the great loneliness of the time when 'the milestones into headstones change, 'neath every one a friend.' I can remember how much he missed that poet, for he used to tell my mother that hers was the best 'mayonnaise' he had eaten since Jimmy Lowell was there to make it for him. One of my father's dearest possessions was a volume of 'Hearts' Ease and Rue,' given Mr. Holmes by the author, on the title page of which is written: —

Much hearts' ease have I found in you,
But never any root of rue.

"Books of many sorts Mr. Holmes loved. My father used to go and read with him several evenings a week, for in those days his eyesight was beginning to fail and his only resource was his beloved Homer, which he repeated aloud in the oncoming darkness. When my father came they had one amusing little ceremony that I remember. My father would ring twice very slowly. Mr. Holmes would open the door a crack and demand 'the counter-sign.' It would be given, some quotation from a French history that they were reading at the time. Then, and then only, was admittance gained.

"On one memorable evening the door-bell was pulled the requisite number of times. The door was soon opened a fraction and a ferocious voice demanded, 'The counter-sign!' No answer. Mr. Holmes tried again and louder: '*The counter-sign!*'

"From the foot of the steps, out of the darkness of Appian Way, a voice with the unmistakable accent of Erin quavered back, 'Excuse me, sor, but is this Miss Fogarty's Employment Office, sor?'

"The next night there was only one ring at the required time, but Mr. Holmes came down himself, — Miss Tolman went to rest with the birds, — and opened the door. 'What can I do for you? I cannot quite see.'

"A faint gas-light on the corner of Brattle Street dimly outlined a figure in a long coat. 'Is this Miss Fogarty's Employment Office, sor?' Then Mr. Holmes's shout could be heard the length of the street. 'Lawrence, you rascal, come in here this instant.' So my father went upstairs and both were soon comfortable before the charcoal fire.

"They read poetry, history, essays, or adventure. Though very fond of a tale of romance, Mr. Holmes could never endure lengthy descriptions. On one occasion the author ran on for some pages along a lane bordered with autumn flowers. When he could bear it no longer Mr. Holmes protested, 'O Brother Lawrence, Brother Lawrence, cut out the goldenrod!' Thenceforth 'goldenrod' came to be a synonym with us for 'flowery language.'

"In his last years he grew quite blind and withdrew closer into himself. His faithful old housekeeper, Miss Maria Tolman, who had promised his mother never to leave him, was dead. The man who looked after his wants used to take him out to the Common and leave him there on a bench, much to my mother's distress when the weather was bleak. She would send me out to bring him home. But because I was such small fry, he always insisted on coming home with me. There he would upbraid my mother for allowing 'that child to go out there alone,' while we would look at each other, she with a sad little smile, and I with a vast, proud one, at the success of our plot; for from Mason Street to Appian Way there were no street-crossings and Mr. Holmes would go straight and safely home.

"His last Christmas day, a short time before his death, he spent with us, as usual, for his blindness made dining out among strangers difficult. He was very joyous because the doctor had said he might eat anything he liked, even to plum pudding. But we knew the meaning of the words that 'nothing would hurt him now,' and our hearts were heavy. I remember that dinner far better, his enjoyment in everything, so contagious that we were all merry, whatever lay beneath. The next day he came round with his usual Christmas box of candy which he had left behind the day before. I opened the door when I saw him coming and was instructed to give the package to my mother. I begged him to come in, but he would not. He had another box to deliver. A moment he rested on the stone slab at the side of the steps, then got up heavily, — I longed to help him but dared not, — and started down James Street with a rather tired little smile. I stood watching him go, shivering in the blast that swept up Brattle Street. I never saw him again!

"Here are the only verses by Mr. Holmes which have been saved, so far as I know, but there must have been others. He was always so modest that one could only discover his writing by accident. The following sonnet to an old hen was jotted down by old Mrs. Edward B. Hall, as she and Mr. Holmes watched the hens and chickens in the dooryard of an old farm at West Rindge.

SONNET TO AN OLD HEN

Unintellectual bunch of feathers and of bones,
Clumsy of gait and squawking in thy tones,
Thinkst thou these little failings I'd abuse
Or to thy many virtues praise refuse?

A plaintive chick, divorced from mother's care,
I see thee, patient, earn thy daily fare,
And older grown, set careful day and night,
Until thy numerous offspring break to light;
Then, pattern mother, scour the teeming fields
For all which Nature to her fledgling yields.
Love, patience, energy, unfailing thrift,
How many bipeds boast all these their gift?
I dare not further go, respected hen,
Each step I take casts new reproach on men.

Other fragments of Mr. Holmes's versifying have come to light, and I print them, not so much because of their poetical value, as because of their characteristic expression of his own sweet and humor-loving nature.

These lines, called "In Memoriam," were written to four old friends.

IN MEMORIAM

In the pale throng that waits on Lethe's wharf
The outward tide that is to set them off,
Lately, at times not far apart, were four
For whom we carve this tablet on the shore.

J. S. Dwight

Thou, J., in age the first, music subdued
And to thee taught her every turn and mood.
Some "accidental" marred life's rhythm in thee,
And death resolved it into harmony.
Pure soul! Where'er it is that thou hast come,
Thou with the Masters old hast found thy home.

Waldo Higginson

Thou, W., comest next — a man complete.
Duties, allurements, dangers strong to meet.

Wise counsellor, thou, and ever faithful friend,
Aye prompt the weak a helping hand to lend.
When illness laid his heavy bonds on thee,
That thou might'st ne'er again know liberty,
There was no weakness, no distressed complaint
To show that the strong heart was growing faint.
So crept until the last each lingering day,
Till calm, as one asleep, he passed away.

H. W. TORREY

And next comes H., with talent bright endued,
Who like a child among dull Freshmen stood,
And calmly went upon his studious way,
Till tall, grave Seniors came beneath his sway.
At last, content with his collegiate fame,
On Harvard's rolls he left an honored name.

CHARLES STOREY

And last, Oh, C., we call thee back to view, —
Quick brain, large heart! in all things frank and true;
Ardent as ever was unchristened Turk,
Thy pen thou sharpenest for unfinished work.
That done, thou gladly soughtst the social ray
That throws its cheer on man's laborious day.
Then, from thy ample treasury, wouldst thou pour
Thy never-dwindling stock of social lore,
And keep the festal spirits in a glow,
Nor seem to know that thou wast doing so,
Till grave old Time was filled with such delight,
Himself scarce knew the hour of day or night.
Thine illustrations apt and comments shrewd
The lagging conversation still renewed;
No circle of thy friends was e'er complete
So long as thine remained an empty seat.
The well-worn vestment given you at birth
Is taken back again by Mother Earth.
You! When we ask or what you are, or where,
Our only answer is the empty air.

So goes the world along with ready tread.
And makes its note, and leaves behind its dead;
And in the grave's repose at last we see,
A tranquil undisturbed indemnity.

So ended a most unusual life. In spite of a serious handicap, John Holmes expressed himself as fully as did his more fortunate and applauded brother. But the sweetness of his disposition, the gift of humor, and the delightful whimsicality which were so strangely and finely mingled in him, giving him a unique place in the hearts of his friends to whom he revealed himself, would have been lost to the world but for this legacy of his letters. He wrote them without the faintest thought that they would ever be printed, for he was the most genuinely modest and self-distrustful of men, and most faithfully do these letters represent him. Lowell said, "Wendell markets all his goods, John gives his to his friends."

THE END

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